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THE REASONABLENESS AND CERTAINTY OF THE Christian Religion.

VOL. I.

By ROBERT JENKIN, D. D. late Lady *Margaret*'s Professor of Divinity, and Master of St. *John*'s College in *Cambridge*.

The SIXTH EDITION, Corrected.

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TO THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE

JOHN,

EARL of EXETER.

May it pleaſe Your LORDSHIP,

THE *general Decay and Contempt of the* Chriſtian Religion *amongſt us, has made me think, that I could not better employ the Leiſure, which, by Your Lordſhip's Favour, I enjoy, than in uſing my beſt Endeavours to ſhew the Excellency and the Certainty of it. And what I have done, is here humbly preſented to Your Lordſhip, as of Right, and upon many Accounts, it ought to be.*

The Honour and the Satisfaction which I have often had to hear Your Lordſhip ſpeak in the behalf of Religion and Virtue, encourage me to hope, that a Performance, though but ſuch as this, upon that Subject, may obtain Your Acceptance. And the Name only of a Perſon of Your Lordſhip's Honour and Learning, and Knowledge of the World, may perhaps be of more advantage to the Cauſe I undertake, than any thing I have been able to write.

Religion may ſeem by Deſcent, and as it were, by Inheritance, to belong to Your Lordſhip's Care: The Wiſdom and Piety of Your Great Anceſtor, appear to diſtant Ages in the Reformation, which, through the Bleſſing of God, was in ſo great a meaſure, by his means eſtabliſhed in this Kingdom. And I have with joy often thought, that I could obſerve the Spirit and Genius of my Lord Treaſurer BURGHLEY, *now exerting it ſelf more than ever in Your Noble Family. From whence, methinks, we may preſage Happineſs to the Nation, and may yet expect to ſee a true Senſe of Religion revive, and may hope, that even in our Days, Chriſtianity,*

hope

ſtianity, amongſt Engliſhmen, *ſhall be more than a Name, which* is every where ſpoken againſt.

An eminent Virtue is a Publick Good: There is a powerful and commanding Force in Great Examples, to countenance Virtue and diſcourage Vice and Profaneneſs; to make Irreligion appear, as it is, baſe and contemptible in the World; to degrade it, and thruſt it down, among the lower and untaught part of Mankind. Much is not to be expected from the Schools and from the Gown, under ſuch Contempt and Diſcouragement. But the Great and the Honourable have it in their power to do great things; things worthy of Themſelves, and for the advancement of God's Glory. Perſons of High Birth, and both by Nature and Education fitted for the Higheſt Undertakings, whoſe Virtues ſhall flouriſh with their Years, and add New Luſtre to their Hereditary Honours, may yet regain a due eſteem to Religion, and adorn the Goſpel of Chriſt. This is a proper Object for the Ambition of generous aſpiring Minds to expreſs their Gratitude to him who has placed them ſo much above the reſt of the

World; and when they find themselves happy now, to disdain to aim at any thing less than everlasting Happiness hereafter. To be miserable after Happiness, is an aggravation of Misery: but to receive Eternal Blessings, as the Fruits and Improvement of such as are Temporal, is the Privilege of those whom God has been pleased to distinguish from others by his Mercies, and who distinguish themselves by a Regard to his Honour and Service.

All that know BURGHLEY, *(and who is there almost that doth not know it?) are surprised with Wonder and Delight, to observe what Art can do, and to behold the Splendour and the Magnificence of foreign Countries in our own: But the Glories and Rewards of Virtue shall continue, when* BURGHLEY *it self and the World shall be no more; and will make Death but a Passage and an Advancement from one Palace, from one Honour, to another; and a Removal only from the uncertain Riches and imperfect Felicities of this Life, to the Mansions of Eternal Bliss in Heaven.*

That

That these my Endeavours may prove but in any measure serviceable to the Ends of Religion and Virtue, and thereby to the Glory and Happiness of your Honourable Family, in this and a better World, is, My LORD, *the unfeigned Desire and Prayer of,*

Your LORDSHIP's

Most Humble, and

Most Obedient

Servant and Chaplain,

R. JENKIN.

THE

PREFACE.

I AM ſenſible, that the Publication of a Treatiſe of this nature, will be liable to Exceptions, from thoſe for whoſe uſe and Benefit it is chiefly deſigned, who will be ready to lay hold of all Pretences, to avoid the being convinced of what they have ſo little mind to believe. They will be apt to ſay, That if the Truth of Religion were ſo certain, and ſo evident, as it is maintain'd to be, there could be little Need of ſo many Diſcourſes upon this Argument; for it is no Sign of Certainty, that though ſuch Numbers of Books are publiſhed of this kind, which ſo many Men of Learning and Parts have written upon the Subject; yet others, it ſeems, are not ſatisfied in their Performance, but are continually offering ſomething new upon it. They will likewiſe object, That many of the Profeſſors and Miniſters of Religion, do not live as if they believed themſelves, at leaſt, not as if

they

they were so very certain of what they teach; and that if there were so great Certainty, there never could be so many Unbelievers, but all who heard of it, must needs be convinced by such Evidence. I shall therefore shew here, That the Number of Books written on this Subject, doth not prove the Uncertainty of Religion, but rather the contrary: and that the ill Lives of Men is no Argument against the Religion they profess. And then I shall enquire how it comes to pass, that a Religion which carries so plain and convincing Evidence along with it, should yet by too many be disbelieved, or disregarded.

I. To the First thing, it might be sufficient to say, That the Number of Writers is a great Confirmation of the Truth of our Religion; since as many as have undertaken the Proof of it, have always agreed in the main Evidence, and differ only in Method, or in the Management of particular Arguments: and though all have not written with equal Strength and Clearness; yet there is not, I believe, one Author, but has brought sufficient Arguments to confute the Adversaries of Religion. They are pleased indeed, to think otherwise: but they may at least take notice, how obvious it is, that if this Objection prove any thing, it must prove, that there is no such thing as *Certainty* in the World; because there is no Art nor Science, concerning which divers Treatises are not daily published. But are therefore the Natures of Virtue and Vice uncertain? Is it the less certain, whether Justice, Temperance, and common Honesty, be Virtues;

Virtues; or whether Murther, Adultery, and Theft, be Crimes; becauſe Laws are made, and Sermons daily preached concerning theſe things? Or can any Man doubt, that theſe Crimes often meet with ſevere Puniſhments even in this World, tho' Men will take no Warning by never ſo many Examples, but have need of continual Advice and Exhortation to keep them from the Commiſſion of them? Is there the leſs Certainty in the Mathematicks, becauſe *Euclid*, *Apollonius*, and innumerable others of all Ages and Nations, have put forth Books and Syſtems of Mathematicks in ſeveral Forms and Methods?

When many write upon the ſame Subject, it is an Argument of the Excellency and Uſefulneſs of it; not that they are diſſatisfied in what has been already ſaid by others, but that they think, more may be ſaid, or that ſome things may be proved more clearly, in another Method, with more Advantage to ſome Capacities, and with greater Probability of removing the Scruples of ſome Men. It is, undoubtedly, very fit, that all neceſſary Doctrines, upon which the Eternal Happineſs or Miſery of Mankind depends, ſhould be treated of in all kinds of Ways and Methods; and they cannot be too often diſcourſed of, nor by too many Men, that no Objection may remain unanſwer'd, nor Scruple unobſerv'd. Though a *little* may be ſufficient, upon a plain Matter, to wiſe Men; yet too much cannot be ſaid upon a Subject, wherein all Men are concerned: And it is the great Aſſurance of the Truth of Religion, and Charity

to

to the Souls of Men, that has engag'd ſo many Authors in this Cauſe.

Beſides the Primitive Fathers and Apologiſts, Men of the greateſt Learning and Abilities in latter Ages have undertaken this Subject, having made it their Study and Buſineſs, to conſider the Grounds of our Holy Religion. And I think few will pretend to more Judgment to diſcover Truth, or to more Integrity to declare it, than divers Authors; who have had no particular Intereſt or Profeſſion in reference to Religion, but were under only the common Obligations of all Chriſtians; which if they had valued as little as ſome others, they could with as much Wit and Learning have appear'd in the Cauſe of Irreligion, as any that ever undertook it. Many of the moſt eminent in all Profeſſions and Callings have been the moſt zealous Aſſertors of Religion; as I might ſhew by particular Examples which are in every Man's Memory. Indeed, I believe, few Men have ſo vain an Opinion of themſelves, as to think they underſtand their ſeveral Studies and Profeſſions better than many Perſons who have given undoubted Evidence of their unfeigned Belief of the Chriſtian Religion. Men of the greateſt Sagacity and Judgment have not been moved with ſuch Objections as others ſo much ſtumble at; but have liv'd and died the Glory of their Age, and an Honour to their Religion; ſuch were the Learned Prince of *Mirandula*, and that Learned *French* Nobleman *Mornæus*; ſuch were *Grotius*, Sir *Matthew Hale*, Dr. *Willis*; and many beſides, both of our own and other Nations.

tions. I ſhall mention but one more, who indeed was ſo eminent, that I ſcarce need mention him, for he muſt be already in every Reader's Thoughts; I mean, the Honourable Mr. *Boyle*, who was as inquiſitive, and as unwilling to be impoſed upon, and knew as much of Nature, perhaps, as ever any Man, not inſpired, did; and had withal as ſtedfaſt a Belief, and as aweful Apprehenſions of Reveal'd Religion; which he endeavour'd to eſtabliſh and propagate, not only by his own Writings, but by the Labours of others, which he engaged and rewarded by his Laſt Will and Teſtament.

II. But Men do not always live anſwerably to what they profeſs to believe. It were heartily to be wiſhed, that there had never been any occaſion given for this Objection: For though it be very inconſiderable in it ſelf, yet it does, I believe, the moſt Miſchief of any; becauſe Men naturally govern themſelves more by the Example than by the Judgment of others, or even than by their own Reaſon. But if we will judge aright, the Example of one Man, who lives according to the Doctrines of Religion, ought to be of more Weight with us, than the Example of never ſo many, who live contrary to their Profeſſion. Becauſe when Men profeſs one thing and act another, their Actions are ſurely as little to be regarded as their Profeſſions. And if we will not believe their Profeſſion againſt their Actions, why ſhould we regard their Example againſt their avow'd Principles and Profeſſion? It is in all other Caſes eſteemed a good Argument for the Truth of any thing, when

Men

Men confeſs it againſt themſelves. And the Motives and Temptations are viſible, by which they are led aſide from their own declared Faith and Judgment; this Pleaſure, or that Profit, is the Cauſe of it, which every Man can point to. But when he, who lives conformably to his Principles, denies himſelf, when he loſes and ſuffers by it, he muſt needs be in great earneſt; whereas the others are apparently brib'd, to forſake that in Practice, which, notwithſtanding, they cannot but own in the Theory and Principles.

This was an old Prejudice againſt Philoſophy, That the Philoſophers did not obſerve their own Precepts. But it was rejected by wiſe Men, as no Argument againſt the Truth and Uſefulneſs of Philoſophy. It is a great Objection againſt the Men, but ſure it can be no Argument againſt the Things themſelves, that they are diſregarded by thoſe who underſtand their Worth, and pretend to have a due Value and Eſteem for them. And whoever renounces the Faith, or takes up Principles of Irreligion, becauſe of any ill Practices of others, too plainly declares either that in Truth and Sincerity he never had any, or that he is very willing to part with his Religion. All Men make ſome Pretence to Reaſon; and thoſe Men moſt of all, who are ſo apt to decry Religion upon this account, That many who profeſs to believe it, do not always live up to its Rules and Inſtructions: But they do not conſider, in the mean time, That Men generally act as much againſt Reaſon as againſt Religion; and that therefore this Objection, if it can ſignifie any

any thing, must banish all Reason and good Sense out of the World. If there be no True Religion, because so few practise it as they ought; there can be no True Reason neither, because the Lives of so many Men contradict it. And some, perhaps, would be contented, that there should be no True Religion, rather than that there should be no True Reason; because then they must be no longer allowed to be able to reason against Religion.

But if the Truth and Reality of things depend upon the Practice of Men, then the same Religion may be true and false at the same time; it may be true in one Age, and false in another; or true in one Country, and false in the next; and must be more or less true or false, in the same proportion, as the Lives and Manners of its Professors are more or less virtuous or vicious. Indeed this is so unreasonable and unjust a Prejudice against Religion, though it be grown a very common one, that methinks every Man should be asham'd of it; especially Men of Reason, who scorn so much, in all other Cases, to depend upon the Practice and Authority of others. And it is hard to believe, that Men who think at all, can think as they speak, when they make use of this Objection. Will any Man suppose, that Temperance doth not preserve Health, tho' he should see his Physician run into Excess? Or, that Poison will not kill, tho' the Man who tells him so, and advises him against it, be so desperate as to take it himself?

But as absurd as this Objection is in it self, it is most of all absurd, when it is urged against the

the Christian Religion; of which we are assured, that one of the Twelve who first preach'd it, was an Apostate, and a Traitor: And our Saviour declares, that many who had preached and wrought Miracles in his Name, should be at last rejected by him, *Matt.* vii. 21. And therefore, for any to make this Cavil against Christianity, is only to shew, that they do not consider it, or will not remember the plainest and most remarkable Points of it.

III. The Causes of Unbelief amongst Christians, notwithstanding the clearest Evidence for their Religion, are too many to be here recounted: But I shall mention some of the Chief of them.

1. Vicious Men are very unwilling to believe that Religion to be True, which is so directly contrary to their whole Course of Life, and to all their Inclinations and Desires; but they are very ready to catch at any Cavils and Pretences against it. The Lives of too many Christians have brought a Scandal, though a very unjust one, upon the Religion which they profess: And Men who find themselves more inclined to do as they see them do, than as they hear them acknowledge they ought to do, make no sufficient Enquiry into the Principles of Religion.

2. Divers Men have had a strange Ambition to say something new upon every Subject they treat of; and in order to that, have set themselves, with all their Skill and Power, to contradict and overthrow what has been said by others, that they might make way for their own

own Opinions; or so to refine upon the Notions of others, that they might appear New, and of their own Invention: which has made inconsiderate Men conclude, that we are always to seek in our Doctrine, and have no fixed Principles: Whereas Men of Learning and Judgment know, that commonly what is with so much Ostentation proposed and recommended to us for New, has been considered and rejected of old, though not, perhaps, in the very terms, yet in the Sense and Substance of it; or else it is some True Doctrine under a different Form and Manner of Expression.

The Improvements which have been made in Philosophy, this last Age, afford a real and great Advantage towards the Proof and Establishment of Religion in Mens Minds; and yet there are few things which have been more abused to the Dishonour of it. For when Men find it convenient to give some Vent to the Philosophical Humour, they bethink themselves of a fit Subject for it to discharge it self upon; and this must be something Great, and something that is very New and Surprising; and there is nothing which answers all these Qualities so well as a New Account of the Origine of the Universe, and then the History of the Creation in *Genesis*, as well as the World it self, must undergo all the Alterations which they are pleased to impose upon it, that it may perfectly submit and comply with their New Hypothesis. If this Fancy should hold, New Systems of the World will be as common as New Romances: They must pardon me the Ex-

preſſion; for *Des Cartes* himſelf, among his Friends, gave no better Name to his Syſtem; which was the firſt Ground and Occaſion to all the reſt. And nothing is more eaſie with a Philoſophical Wit, than to build or deſtroy a World: But it is to be hoped, when they have wearied themſelves with New Contrivances, they will let us have our Old World again. In the mean time, theſe Men, who have too much Philoſophy to have no Religion, put dangerous Weapons into the Hands of thoſe, who have neither the one nor the other; and know not how to uſe them but to do miſchief. And there is nothing ſo plain, but it may be rendered difficult and obſcure to many Men, by long and ſubtile Diſputes. If great numbers of Men ſhould write concerning the Sun's Heat and Light, and Motion for many Years, and every one ſhould ſtill contradict all that went before him, and ſtrive to ſay ſomething New and Strange upon the Subject; the laſt, for ought I know, might pretend to prove, that perhaps there may be no Sun at all: Which indeed, is no more than what the Scepticks have ſaid. And this Infidelity and Scepticiſm concerning God, and his Providence, and Revelation, muſt end in the Scepticiſm of our very Senſes, if theſe Principles be purſued in their direct and unavoidable Conſequences.

Others have been too bold with the Myſteries of Religion, and have pretended to explain them ſo far, as if they would endeavour to preſent us with a Religion without all Myſtery, by which at the ſame time they have expoſed Themſelves to reproach, and Religion to the Scorn of

of such as are glad to take all Occasions to shew their Good-will to it. The evident and declared Design of the *Socinians*, is, to retain no Mysteries, but by forced Interpretations of Scripture to expound them all to their own, that is, to a new and absurd Sense; and it is but too plain, that there is a combined Design carried on between Them and the Deists, who are contented to pass for Christians, with a Distinction, and without a Mystery: *Anti-Trinitarian* is a milder Word than *Anti-Christian*, and *Unitarian* is but a different Name for *Deist*.

Another sort have been very laborious in finding out Mysteries, where there are none; and under a pretence of reducing the plainest Doctrines to clear Principles, have only amused and confounded Men in the true and obvious Notions of them. Thus the Duties of Love to God, and to our Neighbour, are plain in themselves, and are as plainly set down in the Scriptures: And to raise abstracted and metaphysical Speculations upon so plain Texts, is only to tell us what we know before, in other and less intelligible Terms, or else to fall into the nice and rash Disputes of the School-men, or into the Enthusiastick Heats of the Mystical Divines; which can have no Tendency to the Peace or Edification of the Church, but gives an occasion to the Adversary to blaspheme.

3. A third Cause of Infidelity, has been the Rashness of some Criticks. For if any thing relating to Religion has been once called in question, by Men who have got themselves a Name, by writing more boldly than wiser Men have

done, the Authority of ſuch Men ſhall be thought a ſufficient Anſwer to all the Arguments that can be taken from any thing which they are pleaſed to diſlike. Criticiſm, when it falls to the Share of a prudent Man, is, without doubt, a neceſſary and moſt valuable Part of Learning: But it muſt be confeſs'd, that there is hardly any thing more impertinent, than an impertinent Critick. It is a great thing, if it be well conſidered, to ſet the Bounds, and fix the Territories of Learning, to adjudge to every Author his own Works, and ſay, that this Book, or perhaps ſome ſmall part of a Book ſhall be his, and the reſt he ſhall have nothing to do withal. This is no trivial Matter, nor of ſmall Conſequence, and ought not to be at the Pleaſure of any one who has a mind to be taken notice of, for contradicting the received Opinion, and being more confident than others. And the leſs Occaſion there is for theſe Criticks, the more Danger there is from them; for if there be no Work for them, they will be apt to make themſelves Work: And what Author will be able to ſtand before Men, whoſe Buſineſs and Ambition it is to find fault? But though the Juriſdiction of Criticks be very large and abſolute; yet, I have taken care not to come under it, but have purpoſely avoided inſiſting upon any Authorities which have fallen under their Diſputes, unleſs it be, perhaps, in ſpeaking of the *Sibyls*; but there I have the Conſent of the beſt Criticks, beſides evident Reaſon, on my ſide, ſo far as I am concern'd for them.

4. A Pretence to Miracles and Prophecies, without Reaſon or Ground for it, in behalf of ſome particular Errors, has weaken'd the Belief of the True Miracles and Prophecies: And whilſt laborious Endeavours have been uſed to ſhew, that the Chriſtian Religion cannot be true, unleſs thoſe Doctrines be true, which have no Foundation in it; the quite contrary has happened to what in Charity we muſt ſuppoſe theſe Authors deſign'd: for inſtead of owning their Religion to be true, Men, who are convinced of the Weakneſs of their Pretences, have taken them at their Word, and have been forward to grant them, that there is no Religion true, and therefore not theirs.

5. I ſhall ſhew at large, in due time, That the many Differences and Diſputes in Religion, are no Prejudice to the Truth and Certainty of it; but they are, notwithſtanding, a great Scandal and Temptation, and a great Hindrance to the Salvation of Men, eſpecially as they are commonly managed; whilſt by all imaginable Arts and Means, Men of different Parties and Opinions ſtrive to run down their Adverſaries. Thoſe who are concern'd, would do well, I ſhould think, to conſider what Miſchief may enſue, through the imprudent and unchriſtian Management of Diſputes, even in a right Cauſe, which has no need of ſuch Methods; and therefore they are the leſs excuſable, who uſe them in defence of ſuch a Cauſe. If we would convince or perſuade Men in any other thing, we never are wont to think it a proper Expedient, to uſe them ill, and give them hard Words: And is

rough Usage proper only for the Propagation of the Doctrines of the Gospel, and of a Religion of Peace, and Meekness, and Charity?

I know what Examples may be produced to countenance this Practice; but those great Authors have Excellencies enough for our Imitation, we need not imitate their Faults. Our Blessed Saviour, indeed, himself, and his Apostles, did not always forbear severe Language; but then they spoke with a divine Power and Authority, and knew how to speak to the Hearts as well as to the Ears of Men, and fully perceived when this was the last and only Remedy to be used; they could strike dead with their Words, and were infallible in the Use of such Expressions as were proper for the present Occasion, either to comfort or to terrify Sinners, or awaken them to Repentance. There is no doubt, but a seasonable Reproof or Rebuke, though it be very severe, may be not only consistent with Charity, but may also be the Effect of it; and if ever we may speak with the Power and Authority, as well as in *the meekness and gentleness of Christ*, we must do it when the Truth of the Christian Religion is called in question, and that by Christians. We live in an Age in which Men think they have done a great thing, and enough for them to value themselves upon, if they can but start a bold Objection against the Scriptures, though it have never so little Sense in it. We have sufficient Warrant to treat these Men as they deserve: for the Apostles were commanded (according to a Custom in use among the *Jews*) to *shake off the dust*

duſt of their feet, againſt ſuch as rejected their Doctrine: And the leaſt we can ſay to them, is to let them know, that if they will not believe, we are ſorry for it, but cannot help it, and that they will have the Worſt of it. Mr. *Hobbes* himſelf will allow, that an Atheiſt ought to be baniſhed as a publick Miſchief, and ſcarce any Terms can be too ſevere for thoſe who openly apoſtatize from the Religion in which they have been baptized, and blaſpheme that Holy Name by which they are called. We muſt not ſo debaſe the Goſpel of Chriſt, as to ſeem to beg their Approbation, which, I am ſure, we have little need of, in the preſent caſe. I am far from thinking any thing ſmall or inconſiderable, in which the Honour of God, and the Truth of Religion is concerned; but certainly a great Diſtinction is to be made between them from whom we differ in particular Points, tho' of great Moment and Conſequence, and thoſe who reject the Whole. Our chief Zeal and Strength ſhould be employ'd againſt the Common Enemies, who delight in our Quarrels, and ſport themſelves with the mutual Wounds we ſo freely give one another.

6. We have a ſort of Men amongſt us, who from hence have taken occaſion to make it their whole Buſineſs both by their Diſcourſes and Writings, to laugh all Religion and Morality out of the World: Which has made our very Wit to degenerate, though this be the only thing for which theſe Men ſeem to value themſelves; and our Poems, with all their ſoft Numbers, and flowing Style, to be far from deſer-

ving Commendation: For this way of Writing is as much againſt the Rules of Poetry, as againſt thoſe of Virtue; and they can never anſwer it to their own Art, whatever they may do to their Conſciences; but ought to be cenſured for being ill Poets, as well as ill Men. A fine Saying, a ſoft or bold Expreſſion, or a pretty Character! Is this all we have in Exchange for our Reaſon and Religion, which theſe Men have ſo labouriouſly decry'd? Some of the beſt Poets of our Age have been ſo ſenſible of the Diſhonour hereby done to God, the Diſſervice to Mankind, and the Diſgrace to ſo noble an Art, that they have employ'd their Genius a better way. But the extravagant Raillery againſt Religion has been the more licentious, and the more frequent, not only becauſe it has met with Applauſe from ſo many, who are none of the wiſeſt part of Mankind, but becauſe it is the eaſieſt way of Wit, flowing ſo naturally from the very Temper and Inclination of corrupted Minds; and any ſmart Reflexion may eaſily be taken from another Subject, and apply'd here with Advantage, becauſe it looks more extravagant and daring, and ſurprizes for no other Reaſon, but for the bold irreverent uſe of it. What is there in Religion, if it were untrue, that can ſeem ridiculous? What, in the awful Majeſty of the Lord of Heaven and Earth, that can provoke the Laughter and Mockery of any but Fools and Madmen? It is not obvious to conceive, why it ſhould be thought a greater Argument of a Man's Parts, to revile his God, than his Prince; to ſpeak Blaſphemy, than it is

to

to ſpeak Treaſon; or why the Wit ſhould atone for the Crime more in the one caſe than in the other. But the Truth is, a very moderate ſhare of that will ſerve the turn in both caſes. *Produce your Cauſe, ſaith the Lord; bring forth your ſtrong Reaſons, ſaith the God of Jacob.*

7. And indeed, from the Wit and Drollery of ſome, others have taken the Confidence to proceed to Arguments, but they are very far from being either ſtrong or plauſible; for I never in my Life obſerved ſo much Diſingenuity, ſo vain an Affectation of Learning, and ſo groundleſs a pretence to Reaſon, as in theſe Men. The Extravangancies of *Cardan* are known to all that ever heard of him: The Luſt, and Pride, and baſe Flattery of *Vaninus*, is every where viſible. *Aut Deus eſt, aut Vaninus*, is ſuch an Expreſſion, as no Man beſides ever uſed in a Dialogue of himſelf. And Mr. *Hobbes*'s Love of Singularity, and Spirit of Contradiction, is evident from his own Confeſſion; my late Lord *Clarendon*, who knew him well, has acquainted the World both with the Temper and Deſign of the Man, and with the Errors of his Writings. But I ſhall come down lower, and examine a little the Arguments of later Writers, who would take it ill, if it ſhould be thought that they have not retained and improved all the profound Reaſonings of their Predeceſſors in Irreligion, which we may expect to find abridg'd in a Book bearing the Title of *The Oracles of Reaſon*, a Rhapſody of Letters, and ſome ſmall Tracts of divers Men.

But

But here I need not much concern my self with what is taken out of the Authors of *Religio Medici*, and of the *Archæologiæ Philoſophicæ*; becauſe theſe Authors, notwithſtanding thoſe Objections, profeſs an unfeigned Belief of Revealed Religion, in theſe very Books, though the Tranſcriber did not think fit to acquaint his Reader with ſuch Profeſſions, for fear of bringing an Antidote with his Poiſon: But ſince thoſe Objections were ſo far from having that effect upon the Authors themſelves, all that they can ſerve for, is to ſhew, that they can make a Deiſt of none but a weak or an ill Man.

I refer the Reader to the Preface of *Religio Medici*, to ſhew how diſingenuous it is to quote any thing from that Book, as the fix'd and mature Thoughts of Sir *Thomas Brown*. But as if this had not been Diſingenuity enough, we have him brought in, ſaying the quite contrary to what we find in his Book. [a] *How all the Kinds of Creatures*, (ſays Sir *Thomas*) *not only in their own Bulks, but with a Competency of Food and Suſtenance, might be preſerved in one Ark, and within the Extent of Three hundred Cubits, to a Reaſon that rightly examines it, will appear very feaſible.* Thus it is both in the Book it ſelf, and in the Annotations upon it; but our [b] Tranſcriber has made the Author ſay quite contrary, that *this will* not *appear very feaſible.* What is tranſcribed likewiſe from the ſame Author's Book of [c] *Vulgar Errors*, is

[a] Relig. Med. Part. 1. § 22. [b] *Oracles of Reaſon*, p. 5.
[c] *Vulgar Errors*, l. v. c. 4.

not

not fairly cited, and no notice is taken, that this learned Author has a whole Chapter, in that very Work, concerning [d] the Temptation of *Eve* by the *Serpent*; where that is cleared, which was [e] before brought only as an Objection, and transcribed by Mr. *Blount*. How the Translator has dealt with the Author of *Archæologiæ Philosophicæ*, I have not his Book by me to examine, he is living to vindicate himself. One thing I have observed, that Mr. *Blount* assures us, that [f] *this learned Author doth as strenuously affirm, as 'tis possible, that the World had a Beginning about Six thousand Years since*; whereas the Translation which this Gentleman sends Mr. *Gildon*, with his Letter, says, [g] That *to prescribe the Divine Creation so short an* Epocha *as the limits of Six thousand Years, 'tis what he never durst.* Now, either Mr. *Blount* or the Translator are mistaken in their Author, and I rather think the latter must mistake him. For whenever the World had been created, there must have been a time when it had existed but Six thousand Years; and then the Shortness of the *Epocha* might have been objected, as well as now. So that there was no Possibility of preventing this Objection, unless the World could have been Eternal; which was likewise impossible, from the Nature of Time, which being successive, necessarily implies a Beginning; and as this Author, by his Translator, speaks in that place, *we cannot*

[d] Ibid. p. 9. [e] Ibid. l. 1. c. 1. [f] *Oracles of Reason*, p. 3.
[g] Ibid. p. 73.

form

form to our selves any Idea of a thing created from Eternity. But what is cited out of either of these Authors, will fall under some of the Heads that are to be treated of in another Book which I design upon this Subject; I shall therefore here only single out such Particulars as are the proper Notions and Conceits of our Deists, and of which I had no Thought or Occasion to speak elsewhere.

[h] Mr. *Blount* will have the Prophecy of *Jacob*, concerning *the Scepter's not being to depart from Judah, till the Coming of Shiloh*, to have been first applied to the *Messiah* by the *Cabbalists* in the time of the *Maccabees*, and not to have been expounded of *David*'s Line, till the Reign of *Herod*, at least not generally; for here he is not so positive, as a Man might have been in a thing purely of his own Invention. But doth he bring any Proof or Probability for what he says? No, it is mere Conjecture, contrary to all the most ancient Expositions of the Jewish Writers. But the *Jews* had a *Cabbala*, and the *Pharisees* hated *Herod*, and the *Herodians* flattered him, and *Josephus* flattered *Vespasian*; and therefore from some Circumstances superficially framed and put together, he will needs gather the Uncertainty of this Prophecy, and conclude, that it is contradicted by others, without any Consideration had to what so many have said to reconcile them. In the same place, he says, that the *Jews* reckon the Book of *Daniel* among *their Hagiographa*

[h] Ibid. p. 160.

or

or Sacred, but not Canonical Books. But * *Josephus* magnifies the Prophet *Daniel* as the most eminent of all the Prophets; or at least inferior to none: And Father *Simon*, to whose Writings I suppose this Gentleman was no Stranger, might undeceive him in this matter; his Words are these, [i] *Novi quidem Judæos de germanâ vocis illius* (Cetuvim) *significatione inter se non convenire; etsi omnes sentiant Cetuvim, seu Hagiographos non minùs divinos esse & canonicos, quàm reliquos veteris instrumenti libros:* And he plainly proves his Assertion.

The same [k] Gentleman tell us, that *Josephus* confesses, That he *durst not presume to compare the Nation of the Jews with the Antiquity of the most ancient and infallible Writings of the Ægyptians, Chaldæans and Phœnicians.* For which he refers his Reader to *Josephus contra Apion.* lib. 1. where he will find the quite contrary; for *Josephus* makes it his business to confute the Heathen Historians, and to vindicate the Jewish Antiquities against them, and to shew how they contradict themselves and one another, in what they relate of the *Jews* different from the Scriptures. And yet [l] this notorious Mistake is again repeated by our Author; which any one may confute, that will but look into *Josephus.* The Design of his first Book against *Apion*, is, to prove the Truth of the *Jewish Antiquities* against the *Greeks*, from the Writings of the *Ægyptians*, *Phœnici-*

* Antiq. l. x. c. 7. [i] Castigat. ad Opusc. Isaaci Vossii, p. 238.
[k] *Oracles of Reason*, p. 221.
[l] Anima Mundi, p. 25.

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ans and *Chaldæans*. *Josephus* says, He wonders at those, who think that the *Greeks* alone ought to be regarded in Matters of *Antiquity*; whereas there was nothing to be found among them of Ancient Date: Their Cities, their Arts, their Laws, were but of late Original, and their Histories later than all these. But the *Greeks* themselves confess, that there were very ancient Accounts of former times among the *Ægyptians*, the *Chaldæans*, and the *Phœnicians*; [m] *For I omit*, says he, *for the present to put our Nation into the Number with them.* This is far enough from a Comparison; for he doth shew soon after, that the *Jews* had taken as much Care in the writing and preserving their Antiquities, as these Nations, or any other, could possibly do. But it had not been to his purpose to mention the *Jews* in that place with the rest: because he brings his Argument from the Confession of Foreign Historians, who were acknowledged by the *Greeks* to be of much greater Authority in things of this nature, than they could pretend to themselves.

[n] A little before, having translated something out of *Ocellus Lucanus*, to prove the World Eternal, this Gentleman thus subjoins, *Now it is very much, that this Author*, Ocellus Lucanus, *who, for his Antiquity, is held to be almost Contemporary with* Moses, *(if not before him) should have so different a Sentiment of the World's Beginning, from that which* Moses *had: methinks, if* Moses *his History of the Creation, and of*

[m] Ἐω γαρ νυν ἡμας ὑπεισοις συγκαλλεγειν.
[n] *Oracles of Reason*, p. 218.

Adam's

Adam's *being the first Man had been a general received Opinion at that time*; Ocellus Lucanus, *who was so ancient and so eminent a Philosopher, should not have been altogether ignorant thereof.* But what shall we say? if *Ocellus Lucanus* was not so ancient, but of no Antiquity in comparison of *Moses*; then, methinks, this Author might have spared his Pains and his Inferences. And of what Antiquity *Ocellus Lucanus* was, is shewn by *Ludovicus Nogarola*, who translated this Piece of *Ocellus Lucanus* into Latin, and publish'd it with his own Observations upon it. For he makes it appear, from *Plato*, that the Ancestors of this *Ocellus* being banish'd from *Troy*, under *Laomedon*, came to *Myra*, a City in *Lycia*; but *Laomedon* was the Father of *Priamns*, in which time, as every body knows, happen'd the Destruction of *Troy*; and *Jair* was then Judge of *Israel*, about three hundred Years after they had been in Possession of the *Promised Land*. He farther shews, from *Lucian*, that *Ocellus Lucanus* was a Scholar of *Pythagoras*; who lived, sure, long enough after *Moses*, to save our Author's Criticism, or to expose it. Indeed, the best Account we have in Heathen Antiquity, agrees exactly with the History of *Moses*, concerning the Creation of the World. [o] *Aristotle* himself was not satisfied in his own Doctrine of the Eternity of the World; and he [p] confesses, that all the Philosophers asserted the Creation; [q] he says, it was esteem-

[o] Grot. de Verit. Annot. ad c. 7. l. 1.
[p] Aristot. de Cœlo. l. 1, c. 10. [q] Metaphys. l. 1 c. 3.

ed

ed a very ancient Doctrine, and thought by some, to be the Doctrine of the most ancient Theologists, That it was formed out of Water: It is certain, that [r] *Thales*, the first Greek Philosopher who treated of these things, one of the Seven Wise Men of *Greece*, and the Wisest of them, in *Tully*'s Judgment, taught, That God formed all things out of Water: Which Notion, *Homer*, as well as *Thales*, was [s] supposed to learn from the *Ægyptians*.

The same Gentleman has observed, [t] That *the Epicurean Deists labour to have to their Vices imputed rather to a Superiority of their Reason above that of others, than to a Servitude of their Reason to their own Passions; which shews, Vice is naturally esteemed a base and low thing.* This is transcribed from [v] Mr. *Boyle*, without any mention of him: Mr. *Blount*, it seems had a mind to give himself the Honour of the Observation. It is but too plain, that this was his own Case, as his unhappy Death declared.

This, I think, is sufficient to shew, how little this Book deserves the vain Title of *The Oracles of Reason:* it will be hard to meet with any Book, which has left right to so high a Pretence. I shall take notice but of one thing more, and that is, [x] Mr. *Gildon*'s Attempt to prove the Materiality of the Soul; his Arguments are as unlikely to prove it, as most I have seen: but I shall shew the Notion to be absurd in it self, and impossible to be maintained.

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[r] Tull. de Nat. Deor. l. 1. De Legib. l. 2.
[s] Plutarch. de Isid. & Osir. [t] *Oracles of Reason*, p. 93.
[v] *Style of Scripture*, p. 177. [x] Ibid. p. 187.

The

The Eſſence of all Matter muſt be the ſame, whether Extenſion, or any thing elſe, be aſſign'd as the Eſſence of it; and though we may be ignorant of the Eſſence of Matter, yet we know it cannot be Eſſential to it to think: For then all Matter would neceſſarily think. But the Difference in the ſeveral ſorts of Matter can be only in Accidents, that is, in Bulk, Reſt, Motion, Situation, and Figure, none of which can render Matter capable of Thought. For if a different Bulk of Matter could produce Thought in it, and the Subtile Matter ſhould be able to Think and Reaſon, though the Groſs cannot; then the Parts of a Stone would think, when it is ground to Duſt; though when they are joyned and compacted together, they make up a Body, as unlikely to think, as any thing we can imagine. If *Reſt* could cauſe Matter to think, a Stone would be the moſt thinking Creature in the World. If *Motion* could cauſe it, then that which moves with moſt quickneſs would think moſt, as Fire, and the Sun, and Stars: but Motion is only a ſucceſſive Change of Place, and there is no Reaſon why Matter ſhould think in one Place, rather than in another; or why it ſhould think, when it is moved in a Right Line, or in a Circle, or in any Curve Line, rather than when it lies ſtill. Again, There is no Reaſon why Matter ſhould be able to think, or not think, according to its *Situation* or Poſition; why it ſhould think in the Brain, rather than upon the Trencher; or when it is digeſted, and reduced to Animal Spirits, rather than when it is in a more compacted Subſtance, and has a different Relation to the parts

of Matter about it. Laſtly, If any ſort of *Figure* could produce Thought, Stones muſt certainly think, as well as the beſt of us; and ſo, indeed, might any thing elſe: for what Body is there that may not ſubſiſt under all Varieties of Figure?

Neither can any lucky Conjuncture of all theſe together produce a Power and Faculty of Thinking. For, imagine what Bulk, Reſt or Motion, Situation and Figure you can, to meet together, they are all alike uncapable of ſo much as one Thought; ſince there is nothing in the Nature of any of theſe Accidents or Modifications of Matter, but it is as far from any Power of Thinking, as Matter it ſelf is; and therefore Thinking can no more ariſe from a Combination of them together, than it can proceed from the amaſſing together of Matter. All the Accidents, but Motion, have nothing Active or Operative in them, but are only Matter under different Modes and Relations. And Motion, whatever the Figure, or Bulk and Contexture of any Body may be, can be but motion ſtill; and ſuppoſe what Contexture or Modifications you will; what is Motion, under all Determinations, Colliſions and Combinations, but change of Place? And, how can change of Place produce Thinking, under any Variety of Contexture in the Particles of Matter? Free-will is impoſſible to be accounted for by Matter or Motion, as *Epicurus* found, who was therefore forced to have recourſe to his *Declinationes Atomorum*; for which he is ſo juſtly expoſed by *Tully*. For neither can Matter determine its own Motion nor

nor can Motion determine it ſelf, but muſt be determined by ſomething External; whereas all Men find it in their power to determine themſelves by an inward and voluntary Principle.

It is true, indeed, that the Soul, in its Operations, depends very much upon the Temperament of the Body: yet the Soul, even in this State, has Thoughts, which have no Relation to the Body, or any material Thing; as Thoughts of God and Spirits, its own Reflex Thoughts, or Conſciouſneſs of its own Operations. And if it were now capable of no Thoughts, but ſuch as have ſome Dependence upon the Body; yet this can never prove, that the Soul it ſelf is Material, or that Matter Thinks. A Man writes with his Pen, and cannot write without one; Is it therefore his Pen properly that writes, and not the Man? The Body is the Inſtrument of the Soul, in its Operations here; and as the Inſtrument is fit or unfit, ſo much its Operations be more or leſs perfect.

But *it is ſtrange, that the chief Part of us ſhould be of ſuch a Nature, that we can form no* Idea *of it.* We may form an *Idea* of it, though but an imperfect one: And do we not know, that the Eye, the nobleſt Part of the Body, cannot ſee it ſelf, but imperfectly, and by Reflexion? And let any Man try, whether he can form a better *Idea* of a Material Soul, than of an Immaterial one. But this Writer, by *Idea* ſeems to mean a Material *Idea*, or Imagination; and we cannot, indeed, form a Material *Idea* of an Immaterial Spirit. Yet, after all which he, or any Man elſe, has ſaid, the Nature of the Soul

is as clearly underſtood, as that of the Body; and there is nothing encumbred with greater Difficulties than Extenſion, if that be the Eſſenſe of Matter; and if that be not, it is as hard ſtill to know what the Eſſence of Matter is. The Inſtance which he brings of *Brutes*, is eaſily anſwered, Whether they can think, or not. If they cannot, the Objection falls of it ſelf; If they can, I ſhould rather ſuppoſe, that their Souls may be annihilated, or may tranſmigrate and paſs from one Brute to another, than that the Souls of Men muſt be Material, that the Souls of Brutes may be Material too.

Another Gentleman, of late, has aſſerted, [y] That it is *impoſſible for us, by the Contemplation of our own Idea's, without Revelation, to diſcover whether Omnipotency hath not given to ſome Syſtems of Matter, fitly diſpoſed, a Power to perceive or Think*; and, That there is *a Poſſibility that God may, if he pleaſes ſuper-add to Matter a Faculty of Thinking*: which is what he likewiſe calls a *Modification of Thinking*, or *Power of Thinking*. But it ſeems not intelligible, how God ſhould ſuper-add to Matter this Faculty, or Power, or Modification, of Thinking, unleſs he change the Nature of Matter, and make it to be quite another thing than it is, or joyn a Subſtance of another Nature to it. But the Queſtion is, Whether a Faculty of Thinking can be produced out of the Powers and various Modifications of Matter?

[y] *Mr.* Lock's *Humane Underſtanding*, l. 4. c. 3. § 6. *Letter to the Biſhop of* Worceſter, p. 66.

And

And we can have no more Conception, how any Modification of Matter can produce Thinking, than we can, how any Modification of Sound ſhould produce Seeing: all Modifications of Matter are the ſame, as to this Point; and Matter may as well be made no Matter by Modifying, as be made to Think by it. This is juſt as if a Man ſhould maintain, That though all Immaterial Subſtances are not extended and diviſible, yet ſome of them may poſſibly be, or Omnipotence may ſuper-add to them a Faculty of Extenſion and Diviſibility: for Immaterial Subſtances may become diviſible and material by the ſame Philoſophy, by which we may conclude, that Matter may Think; which is the ſame thing as to become immaterial, and to ſurpaſs all the Powers and Capacities of Matter. He [z] urges, that there may be Capacities in Matter, which no Man can conceive, ſince that Gravitating Power, which Sir *Iſaac Newton* has proved to belong to all Bodies, would before have been thought incredible. But there is nothing in this Power above the Nature of Matter, any more than there is in Motion. For Gravitation is only a determinate Mode of Motion: and it is very eaſie to conceive, that Matter is as well capable of one Determination of Motion, as of another; ſince Matter is herein only Paſſive, and not Active, or enabled to move voluntarily, and determine it ſelf, as humane Souls do. That, which is capable of any one Determination of Motion, may be capable of all kinds of Determinati-

[z] *Reply to the Biſhop of* Worceſter's *Anſwer to his Second Letter*, p. 404, &c.

on; but that, which may be determined all ways may not be capable of determining it ſelf any one way. Matter muſt ever remain uncapable of Thinking, unleſs it could change its Nature, and become Immaterial, and then it would not be Matter, which would think, but ſomething elſe. And it is of little Uſe or Conſequence to enquire, what Omnipotence can do by a *Super-addition* of Faculties to Matter; when between thoſe, who prove the Soul to be immaterial, and ſuch as ſuppoſe it to be material, the only Queſtion in Diſpute is, not what a Divine Power can effect, (for theſe Men are unwilling to grant any ſuch Power preſiding over Matter) but whether a Faculty of Thinking can be produc'd out of Matter by any Modifications, or any Changes and Determinations of Motion. But tho' I have, upon this occaſion, mention'd this Gentleman here; yet it would be a great Injury done him, to rank him with the Authors of *The Oracles of Reaſon.*

There is prefix'd to theſe Pieces, an Account of the Life and Death of that unhappy Gentleman, Mr. *Blount*, with pretence to vindicate his Murther of himſelf, becauſe his deceaſed Wife's Siſter refus'd to be married to him; by all the Topicks and Arguments of Reaſon and Philoſophy. Which is ſuch an Undertaking, as I am confident was never heard of before, to prove, that a Man may very gravely and philoſophically kill himſelf, if a Woman, whom he ought not to marry, will not be his Wife. It is ſtrange to ſee, that Men ſhould think it fit to vent ſuch things, as theſe in the Face of the World:

World: but this discovers the *Reason* and *Philosophy* of these Men, and is a fit Preface to such a Book. *This Wisdom descendeth not from Above.* Behold the Men in their Principles and Practices, the demure Pretenders to humane Reason, and moral Virtue, and the Enemies of Reveal'd Religion.

We are fallen into an Age, in which there are a sort of Men who have shewn so great a Forwardness to be no longer Christians, that they have catch'd at all the little Cavils and Pretences against Religion; and, indeed, if it were not more out of Charity to their Souls, than for any Credit Religion can have of them, it were great Pity but they should have their Wish: for they both think and live so ill, that it is an Argument for the Goodness of any Cause, that they are against it. It was urged, as a Confirmation of the Christian Religion, by *Tertullian*, that it was hated and persecuted by *Nero*, the worst of Men: And I am confident, it would be but small Reputation to it, in any Age, if such Men should be fond of it. They speak evil of the things they understand not; and are wont to talk with as much Confidence against any point of Religion, as if they had all the Learning in the World in their keeping; when commonly they know little or nothing of what has been said for that against which they dispute. They seem to imagine, that there is nothing in the World, besides Religion, that has any Difficulty in it; but this shews how little they have considered the Nature of Things, in which multitudes of Objections

ctions and Difficulties meet an obſerving Man in every Thought. And after all, Religion has but one Fault, (as they account it) which they have been able to diſcover in it, and that is, that it is too good and virtuous for them; for when they have ſaid all they can, this is their great Quarrel againſt it, and (as it has been truly obſerved) no Charity leſs than that of the Religion which they deſpiſe, would have much Care or Conſideration for them.

Thus have ſome Men diſhonour'd Religion by their Lives; ſome by an Affectation of Novelty; ſome by invalidating the Authority of Books relating true Miracles and Prophecies, and others by forging falſe ones: Some again, by their too eager and imprudent Diſputes and Contentions about Religion, whilſt from hence others have taken the Liberty to ridicule it, and to diſpute againſt it, but ſo as to expoſe themſelves, whilſt they would expoſe Religion. And thus has the cleareſt and moſt neceſſary Truth been obſcured and deſpiſed, whilſt it has been betray'd by the Vanity and Quarrels of its Friends, to the Scorn and Weakneſs of its Enemies.

However, in all their Oppoſition and Contradiction to Reveal'd Religion, I find it aſſerted by theſe Men, that Atheiſm is ſo abſurd a thing, that they queſtion whether there ever were, or can be an Atheiſt in the World. I have therefore here proved, from the Attributes of God, and the Grounds of Natural Religion, that the Chriſtian Religion muſt be of Divine Revelation; and that this Religion is certainly true,

true, as it is, that God himſelf exiſts which is the plaineſt Truth, and the moſt univerſally acknowledged of any thing whatſoever. And becauſe there is nothing ſo true or certain, but ſomething may be alledg'd againſt it, I ſhall beſides diſcourſe upon ſuch Heads as have been moſt excepted againſt: In which I ſhall endeavour to prove the Truth, in ſuch a manner as to vindicate it againſt all Cavils; though I ſhall not take notice of particular Objections, which is both a needleſs and indeed an endleſs Labour; for there is no End of Cavils: But if the Truth be well and fully explain'd, any Objection may receive a ſufficient Anſwer, from the Conſideration of the Doctrine againſt which it is urged, by applying it to particular Difficulties; as one Right Line is enough to demonſtrate all the Variations from it to be crooked.

It is very eaſy to cavil and find fault with any thing; and to ſtart Objections, and aſk Queſtions, is even to a Proverb eſteemed the worſt Sign that can be of a great Wit, or a ſound Judgment. Men are unwilling to believe any thing to be true, which contradicts their Vices; and the weakeſt Arguments, with ſtrong Inclinations to a Cauſe, will prove or diſprove whatever they have a mind it ſhould. But let Men firſt practiſe the Virtues, the moral Virtues, which our Religion enjoins, and then let them diſprove it, if they can: Nay, let them diſprove it now, if they can, for it ſtands in no need of their favour; but for their own ſakes, let them have a care of miſtaking Vices for Arguments,

guments, and every profane Jeſt for a Demonſtration. I wiſh they would conſider, whether, the Concern they have, to ſet up Natural againſt Reveal'd Religion, proceed not from hence, that, by Natural Religion, they mean no more than juſt what they pleaſe themſelves, or what they judge convenient in every Caſe and Occaſion: Whereas Reveal'd Religion is a fixed and determin'd Thing, and preſcribes certain Rules and Laws for the Government of our Lives. The plain Truth of the matter is, that they are for a Religion of their own Contrivance, which they may alter as they ſee fit; but not for one of Divine Revelation, which will admit of no Change, but muſt always continue the ſame, whatever they can do. Unleſs that were the caſe, there would be little Occaſion to trouble them with Books of this kind; for the Arguments brought againſt the Chriſtian Religion, are indeed ſo weak and inſignificant, that they rather make for it; and it might well be ſaid, as M. *Paſchal* relates, by one of this ſort of Men, to his Companions, *If you continue to diſpute at this rate, you will certainly make me a Chriſtian.* I ſhall venture, at leaſt, to ſay of this Treatiſe, in the like manner as he does of his, That if theſe Men would be pleaſed to ſpend but a little of that time, which is ſo often worſe employed, in the peruſal of what is here offer'd, I hope that ſomething they may meet withal, may ſatisfie their Doubts, and convince them of their Errors.

But though they ſhould deſpiſe whatever can be ſaid to them, yet there are others, beſides the

the profeſs'd Adverſaries of Reveal'd Religion, to whom a Treatiſe of this nature may be ſerviceable. The Truth is, notwithſtanding the great Plainneſs of the Chriſtian Religion, I cannot but think, that Ignorance is one chief Cauſe why it is ſo little valued and eſteemed, and its Doctrines ſo little obey'd: A great part of Chriſtians content themſelves with a very ſlight and imperfect Knowledge of the Religion they profeſs; and are able to give but very little Reaſon for that, which is the moſt reaſonable thing in the World; but they profeſs it rather as the Religion of their Country, than of their own Choice; and becauſe they find it contradicts their ſenſual Deſires, they are willing to believe as little of it as may be; and when they hear others cavil and trifle with it, partly out of Ignorance, and partly from Inclination, they take every idle Objection, if it be but bold enough, for an unanſwerable Argument. Whereas, if Chriſtians were but throughly acquainted with the Grounds of their Religion, and ſincerely diſpoſed to believe and practiſe according to them, they would be no more moved with theſe Cavils, than they would be perſuaded to think the worſe of the Sun, if ſome Men ſhould take a Fancy to make that the Subject of their Raillery. To have the more doubtful and wavering Thoughts of Religion, becauſe it is expoſed to the Scorn and Contempt of ill Men, is as if we ſhould deſpiſe the Sun for being under a Cloud, or ſuffering an Eclipſe; not knowing that he retains his Light, and Religion its Excellency ſtill, though we be in Darkneſs; the Light may

be

be hid from us, but can lose nothing of its own Brightness, though we suffer for want of it, and lie under the *shadow of death.*

The Consideration of the Grounds and Reasons of our Religion is useful to all sorts of Men: For if ever we would be seriously and truly Religious, we must lay the Foundation of it in our Understandings, that, by the rational Conviction of our Minds, we may, (through the Grace of God assisting us) bring our Wills to a Submission, and our Affections to the Obedience of the Gospel of Christ; and the more we think of, and consider these things, the more we shall be convinced of them, and they will have the greater Power and Influence in the Course of our Lives. For though the Truth of the Christian Religion cannot, without great Sin and Ignorance, be doubted of by Christians; yet it is a Confirmation to our Faith, and adds a new Life and Vigour to our Devotions, when we recollect upon what good Reasons we are Christians; and are not such by Custom and Education only, but upon Principles which we have throughly consider'd, and must abide by, unless we will renounce our Reason with our Religion.

And what Subject can be more useful, or more worthy of a rational and considering Man's Thoughts? These things, which are now made matter of Cavil and Dispute, will be the Subject of our Contemplation, and of our Joy and Happiness to all Eternity in the other World. We shall then have clear and distinct Apprehensions of the Means and Methods of our Salvation, and shall for ever admire and adore the Divine Wisdom,

Wiſdom, in the Conduct and Diſpoſal of thoſe very Things about which we now are moſt perplex'd.

But I find my ſelf concerned to ſubjoin to this Preface, already too long, ſomething in Defence of that which will firſt occur to the Reader in the following Treatiſe. For in the Opinion of a learned Writer, whatever, has been or can be ſaid concerning the neceſſity of a Divine Revelation, may be eaſily confuted in very few Words. He confeſſes, that there is great ground of hope and Probability, that God may vouchſafe ſome Revelation of his Will to Men; but he ſays, that *yet it does not from hence at all follow, that God is obliged to make ſuch a Revelation: For then it muſt needs have been given in all Ages, and to all Nations, and might have been claimed and demanded as of Juſtice, rather than wiſht for and deſired as of Mercy and condeſcending Goodneſs.*

To which I anſwer, that my Reaſoning does not proceed upon the Juſtice of God only, but principally upon his Mercy, and jointly upon the Conſideration of his Honour, his Holineſs, and all the Divine Attributes. But I know nothing in the World, which any Creature can *claim* or *demand* as of ſtrict Juſtice from God. St. *Paul* in his Epiſtle to the *Hebrews* tells them, *God is not unrighteous to forget your Work and Labour of Love, which ye have ſhewed towards his Name, in that ye have miniſtred to the Saints, and do miniſter.* Heb. vi. 10. But did he thereby warrant them to *claim and demand as of Juſtice* a Reward due to their Charity? To

To *claim* and *demand* any thing of God is Language unknown in Scripture, and allowable neither according to Revealed nor Natural Religion. The Juſtice of God is indeed underſtood with reference to his Creatures, and is implied and concerned in all his Proceedings with them. But, if we may preſume to ſay, that God is obliged to do, or not to do any thing; the Obligation is not to his Creatures, but his own Infinite Perfections oblige him to act, or not to act, in ſuch caſes. He muſt act conſiſtently with his Juſtice and Mercy, and every other Attribute, that is, conſiſtently with himſelf, and ſuitably to his own Divine Nature. *If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful, he cannot deny himſelf*, 2 Tim. ii. 13. But will any Man therefore *claim and demand* of him, *as of Juſtice* to keep his Word, and perform his Promiſe? God is declared in Scripture to act for his own ſake, for his Name ſake, and for his Word and Promiſe ſake, *Iſa.* xliii. 25. xlviii. 9. *Pſal.* cv. 42. *Acts* xiii. 23. And his Creatures are ſecure in his Infinite Juſtice and Veracity, and Honour and Goodneſs; but none can plead any Right or *demand* Juſtice of him, upon any account, which would be Blaſphemy to imagine. We could therefore argue with no Certainty concerning Divine Revelation, or any other Bleſſing to be vouchſafed to us, if we could be aſſured of nothing from him, but what we can in ſtrict Juſtice demand. But from the Conſideration of the Divine Attributes, and of the Condition of Mankind, we have the greateſt Reaſon not only to hope, but aſſuredly to conclude, that

that God would not leave Men wholly deſtitute of Revelation.

Nor muſt this *needs have been given in all Ages and to all Nations.* For as to its univerſal Reception, it was ſufficient, that Revelations ſhould be made to ſuch Perſons, and in ſuch Ages and Nations, as might beſt communicate them to other Nations and Ages of the World. And I have, I preſume, ſufficiently proved, that by a peculiar Providence in the Conduct of the Patriarchs, and the Diſpenſation of the Law, and the various State and Condition of the *choſen People*; all Nations have been the better for the Informations and Inſtructions delivered down to them from the firſt Progenitors of Mankind, to whom Revelations were vouchſafed; and divers Rites and Doctrines of Revealed Religion have been preſerved among the moſt remote and barbarous Gentiles.

But as to particular Ages and Nations, the Knowledge and Profeſſion both of Revealed and of Natural Religion muſt be different, according to the different Capacities and Abilities of Underſtanding, and the Tempers and Diſpoſitions of Mind, in thoſe, who had the Opportunities of receiving and of communicating to others, the Truths of Religion. God has been pleaſed frequently to declare, what Natural Reaſon may ſuggeſt, and every Days Experience teſtifie; that he deals not with Mankind according to the Severity of ſtrict and abſtracted Juſtice. And ſince every other Attribute perſuades and promiſes, and Juſtice it ſelf does not forbid a Revelation, but rather directs and appoints it; the

Argument

Argument from the divine Attributes is as ſtrong and cogent in this, as in any other Caſe, where we have no divine Promiſe or Declaration. Since God as neceſſarily acts in Conformity to his other Attributes, as to his Juſtice; I am convinced, that a divine Revelation is neceſſary, not becauſe *it might have been claimed and demanded as of Juſtice*; but expected and aſſured from his Mercy, his Righteouſneſs, and every other Attribute.

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THE

THE REASONABLENESS and CERTAINTY OF THE Christian Religion.

BOOK I.

PART I.

IN Discourſing of the *Reaſonableneſs and Certainty of the Chriſtian Religion*, I ſhall uſe this Method: I. I ſhall ſhew, That from the Notion of a God, it neceſſarily follows, that there muſt be ſome Divine Revelation. II. I ſhall enquire into the Way and Manner by which this Revelation may be ſuppos'd to be delivered and preſerved in the World. III. I ſhall ſhew, That, from the Notion of a God, and the Nature and Deſign of a Divine Revelation, it follows, That the Scriptures of the Old and New Teſtament are that Divine Revelation. IV. That no other Books or Doctrines whatſoever can be of Divine Revelation. V. I ſhall from hence give a Reſolution of our Faith, by ſhewing, That we have the ſame Evidence for the Truth and Divine Authority of the Scriptures, that we have for the Being of God himſelf; becauſe it follows, from the Notion of a God, both that there muſt of neceſſity

be some Divine Revelation, and that the Scriptures are that Divine Revelation. VI. Having done this, I shall, in the last place, endeavour to clear such Points as are commonly thought most liable to exception in the Christian Religion; and shall propose some Considerations, which may serve to remove such Objections, and obviate such Cavils as are usually rais'd against the Holy Scriptures.

CHAP. I.

That from the Notion of a God, it necessarily follows that there must be some Divine Revelation.

IN the first place, I shall shew how reasonable and necessary it is to suppose, that God should reveal himself to Mankind: And I shall insist the rather upon this, because it is not usually so much consider'd in this Controversy, as it ought to be; for if it were, it certainly would go very far towards the proving the Divine Authority of the Scriptures; since if it be once made appear, that there must be some Divine Revelation, it will be no hard Matter to prove, that the Scriptures are that Revelation: For if it be proved, that there must be some Revealed Religion, there is no other which can bear any Competition with that contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament. My first Business therefore shall be to shew, from the Consideration of the Attributes of God, and of the Nature and State of Mankind, that, in all reason, we cannot but believe, that there is some Revealed Religion in the World.

There is nothing more evident to Natural Reason, than that there must be some Beginning, some First Principle of Being, from whence all other Beings proceed. And nothing can be more absurd, than to imagine

gine that That wonderful Variety of Beings in the Heavens, and Earth, and Seas, which all the Wisdom of Man is not able, in any measure, to understand, or thoroughly to search into, should yet be produced and continued for so many thousand Years together, without any Wisdom or Contrivance; that an unaccountable Concourse of Atoms, which could never build the least House or Cottage, should yet build and sustain the wonderful Fabrick of the whole World; that when the very Lines in a Globe or Sphere cannot be made without Art, the World itself, which that is but an imperfect Imitation of, should be made without it; and that less Skill should be requir'd to the forming of a Man, than is necessary to the making of his Picture; that Chance should be the Cause of all the Order, and Fortune of all the Constancy and Regularity in the Nature of Things; and that the very Faculties of Reason and Understanding in all Mankind, should have their Original from that, which had no Sense or Knowledge, but was mere Ignorance and Stupidity. This is so far from being Reason and Philosophy, that it is down-right Folly and Contradiction.

From a Being therefore of infinite Perfection must proceed all things that are besides, with all their Perfections and Excellencies, and among others, the Virtues and Excellencies of Wisdom, Justice, Mercy and Truth, must be derived from him, as the Author of all the Perfections of which the Creatures are capable. And it is absurd to imagine, that the Creator and Governour of the World, who is infinitely more Just, more Wise, and Good, and Holy than any Creature can be, will not at last reward the Good, and punish the Wicked. For, *Shall not the Judge of all the Earth do right?* Is it to be supposed, that the Wise and Good God would create Men only to abuse themselves and one another? To live a-while in Sin and Folly here, and some of them in the most extravagant and brutal Wickedness, and then go down to the Grave, and so

there should be an end of them for ever? What is there worthy of the infinite Wisdom of God, in so poor a Design as this! Doth not the Voice of Nature it self teach us, and has it not been the general Belief and Expectation of all Ages and Nations, that the prosperous Sinner, who is subtle and powerful to do Mischief, must suffer in another World, for what he has done amiss here? And, that all is not to pass away with us in Sport and Extravagance, in Laughter and Noise, in Riot, or in Violence and Cruelty, as some Men are willing to believe; as if the World were made for the Wicked, and they to abuse it?

It appears likewise from the common Belief and Experience of Mankind, that as there is a God of infinite Goodness and Holiness; so there are wicked and malicious Spirits, which are ever contriving the Mischief and Ruin of Men. For besides the Evidence of this from Scripture, which we must be allowed here to alledge in the Nature at least of an History, it is Folly to imagine that all the Oracles and Prodigies of the Heathens could be mere Forgeries, and that there was no Ground nor Foundation for such a Belief, as universally obtained in all Nations and Ages of the World, and for the Customs and Practices which followed upon this Belief, that there are *Dæmons*, or Spirits, of an evil and malicious Disposition and Power. I shall instance only in the unnatural Cruelties which the Heathen World, even the *Greeks* and *Romans* themselves, were continually put upon, by the Instigation of these malicious and wicked Spirits. For the Heathen Nations offered up Multitudes of innocent Men and Women, and even their own Children, in Sacrifice to their False Gods; which is as sure an Evidence that there are such Beings, which required these Cruelties from them, as it is, that there are Tyrants and Persecutors, when they cause innocent Men to be murthered, and Children to be torn from the Arms of their Parents, and slain in their Sight. And tho' the Domi-

Dominion of Satan be now restrained by the overruling Power of the Gospel, we have as great Evidence from all History that there are such Beings as Devils, as we have for any other Matter of Fact whatsoever. There have been indeed many false Stories concerning Spirits, as well as in other Matters of History: But does this prove that there are none true? Or could the Historians of all Times and Places be perpetually imposed upon, or conspire to impose upon others? If we may credit Authors of as high Esteem as any human History can afford; Men of good Learning and true Courage, and of little Inclination to believe Things of this Nature, have been Witnesses of Apparitions. I instance in [a] *Dion*, *Brutus*, [b] *Curtius*, *Rufus*, and *Athenodorus* the Philosopher. When *Dion* and *Brutus*, Men famous for Philosophy, not prone to Fear, but of great Constancy of Mind, became so concerned, that they acquainted others with what they had seen; this, as [c] *Plutarch* remarks, is a mighty Argument for the Truth of this Doctrine. There is no ancient History but gives some Instance or other of these Things; and all the modern Histories of Heathen Nations are full of such Relations as confirm this Truth to us; and even among Christians, those who have by unlawful Arts put themselves under the Power of wicked Spirits, have been convinced that there are such Beings; which is proved, not only by the publick Confessions of Witches in all Nations, but by *the private* [d] *Acknowledgments of divers learned Men*, both Physicians and others, who have made Attempts to discover the Truth of this Matter, in different Places, *and were Persons neither timorous nor superstitious.* But the Apparition of Spirits is Preternatural; and therefore, that Good Spirits, who live in perfect Obe-

[a] Plut. in Dion. & Brut. [b] Plin. Epist. l. 7. ad Suram.
[c] In Dion. initio. [d] *See Mr.* Boyle's Excellency of Theology, *&c.* § 1. *and Dr.* Casaubon's Preface *to* Dee *of* Spirits.

dience to the Divine Will, and in conformity to the Order of their Nature, should appear, is now no more to be expected than any other Miracle: But there are frequent Apparitions of Bad Spirits in Countries where the Christian Religion is not received; and where it is received, they appear to such as are willing to come under their Power, but very rarely to others. And if the Devil, after so much Human Blood as he has caused to be spilt in his Sacrifices, and after so many Oracles and Impostures, can yet persuade some Men, that there is no such Being; this is one of his subtilest Stratagems of all, and proves how great Power, tho' in a different kind and manner, he still retains over the Minds of Men.

Since therefore it is most certain, that there is a Being of Infinite Power, and Wisdom, and Justice, and Goodness; and that there is likewise a malicious cruel Spirit, ever watchful and industrious to abuse and destroy Mankind: it is highly reasonable to believe, that a Being of such Infinite Perfections, after he had created Man, would communicate himself to him, would set him a Rule by which he ought to live, and prescribe him Laws whereby he might answer the Ends of his Creation, and attain to that Happiness which he was made capable of, and designed for by his Maker. We cannot suppose, that the God of all Goodness and Wisdom would create Man, and then leave him to himself, to follow his own Inventions, and to live at random, without any Law or Direction, to frame his Actions by, and to be exposed to all the Assaults of an implacable subtle Enemy, without any Caution and Instruction given him, or any Help and Assistance afforded for his Defence. *Man*, in his Innocence, was not thus to be left to himself. And we have all the reason in the World to believe, tho' we had not the express Word of Scripture for it, that the God of Infinite Goodness would not disregard this corrupt State of Mankind, but would use some Means

Means to reclaim them from the *Error of their Ways*, to bring them to a Knowledge of themselves, and of the Divine Majesty, to inform them of their Duty, and direct them to Happiness.

How Man became so prone to all Evil, we can know only by Revelation; and therefore since the Notion of the Pre-existence of Souls is groundless, (as I shall hereafter prove) those who reject all Revelation, must suppose, that Man was first created in the state of Sin and Misery; which is a very heinous Imputation upon the Goodness and Justice of God: But to suppose him placed in this Condition, without all Help or Remedy, is to charge God still more foolishly. But how Men became so, is not here the matter of Enquiry; it is evident, that Man is of himself in a miserable and helpless Condition; and considering the great Ignorance and Wickedness which have been from the Fall of our First Parents visible continually in the World, and still reign in it; considering, I say, the notorious Wickedness and gross Ignorance of Men, which, from the earliest Records of Antiquity, have continued down to our own Times; nothing is more reasonable than to think, that a Being of Infinite Perfection would take some Care to rectify the Mistakes, and reform the Manners of Men. Can we believe it consistent with Infinite Truth, never to manifest it self in the World, but to suffer all sorts of Men, of all Nations, to be exposed to all the Designs and Delusions of Impostors, and of seducing and apostate Spirits, without any sufficient means afforded them to undeceive and rescue themselves? Can we suppose, that God, of Infinite Majesty and Power, and who is a *Jealous God*, and will not *give his Honour to another*, should suffer the World to be guilty of Idolatry; to make themselves Gods of Wood and Stone? Nay, to offer their Sons and their Daughters unto Devils, and to commit all manner of Wickedness in the Worship of their False Gods; and make Murther, and Adultery, and the worst of Vices, not only their

Practice, but their Religion? Can we imagine, that the True God would behold all this, for so many Ages, among so many People, and yet not concern himself to put a Stop to so much Wickedness, and to vindicate his own Honour, and restore the Sense and Practice of Virtue upon Earth?

I shall, in due Place, prove at large, That Mankind have in all Ages had the greatest Necessity for a Revelation to direct and reform them; and, That the Philosophers themselves taught abominably wicked Doctrines, who yet were the best Teachers and Instructors of the Heathen World. And we have no true Notion of God, if we do not believe him to be a God of infinite Power, and Knowledge, and Holiness, and Mercy, and Truth; and yet we may as well believe there is no God at all, as imagine that the God of Infinite Knowledge should take no Notice of what is done here below; that Infinite Power should suffer it self to be affronted and despised, without requiring any Satisfaction; that Infinite Holiness should behold the whole World lie in Wickedness, and find out no Way to remedy it; and that Superstition and Idolatry, and all the Tyranny of Sin and Satan, for so long a time, should enslave and torment the Bodies and Souls of Men, and there should be no Compassion in Infinite Mercy, nor any Care over an erroneous and deluded World, in the God of Truth.

Would a wise and good Father see his Children run on in all manner of Folly and Extravagancy, and take no care to reclaim them, nor give them any Advice, but leave them wholly to themselves, to pursue their own Ruin? And if this be unworthy to suppose of Natural Parents, how much more unreasonable is it to imagine this of God himself, whom we cannot but represent to ourselves, as beholding our forlorn Estate with all the Compassions of the tendereſt Father or Mother, without the Weakness and Infirmities that accompany them in Human Parents? How unreasonable is it to entertain

tain ſuch a Thought of Almighty God, Infinite in Goodneſs and Mercy, as to ſuſpect that he would ſuffer Mankind to make themſelves as miſerable as they can, both in this World and the next, without putting any Stop to ſo fatal a Courſe of Sin and Miſery, or interpoſing any Thing for their Direction, to ſhew them the Way to eſcape Deſtruction, and to obtain Happineſs! The Fall of our Firſt Parents is known to us only by Revelation, and therefore is not to be taken into Conſideration, when we argue upon the mere Principles of Reaſon. But I conſider Mankind, as we find it in Fact (ſetting aſide the Advantages of Revelation) Wicked, and abandoned to Wickedneſs, in the *ſnares of the devil, taken captive by him at his will*, unable *to work out their own ſalvation*; loſt and undone, without Power or Strength, without any Help or Remedy. And in this State of the World, however it came to paſs, is there no Reaſon to believe that Infinite Goodneſs ſhould take ſome Courſe, and not diſregard all Mankind lying in this Condition?

The great Argument of the Scoffers of the laſt Days, St. *Peter* tells us, would be this, That all Things go on in their conſtant Courſe, and that God doth not meddle or concern himſelf with them. *Where is the promiſe of his coming? for ſince the fathers fell aſleep, all things continue as they were from the creation*, 2 Pet. iii. 4. And if no Promiſe had ever been made, they would have had ſome Reaſon in their Arguing. For that which rendered the Heathen without Excuſe, was, That they did not make uſe of the Natural Knowledge that they had of God, to lead them to the Knowledge of his Revealed Will, which they had frequent Opportunities of becoming acquainted withal, and had many Memorials of it amongſt them in every Nation: But, *they did not like to retain God in their knowledge.* And this is the Force of St. *Paul*'s Argument, *Acts* xvii. and *Rom.* i. (unleſs this latter Chapter were to be underſtood, as Dr. *Hammond* interprets it, of the *Gnoſtick* Hereticks:)

That

That the *Gentiles* ought not to pervert and stifle those Natural Notions which God had implanted in their Minds, but from the Law of Nature to proceed to find out the Written Law; and for this Reason, the Bounds of the Habitation of other Nations were determined and appointed by God, *according to the number of the Children of* Israel, that *they might seek the Lord*, and might be able to find and discover the True Religion and Way of Worship among that People to whom he had revealed himself, *Deut.* xxxii. 8. *Act.* xvii. 26, 27. They might have been less vicious than they were, without the Knowledge of a Revelation; and therein they were inexcusable, that tho' they could not free themselves from the Power of Sin, yet they might not have given themselves so wholly up to it, as to become excluded from the Grace and Salvation to be obtained by the Revealed Will of God. And when God has revealed himself, all who will not use the Means, and by a due Improvement of their Reason endeavour from Natural Religion to arrive at Revealed, become inexcusable for their Negligence and Contempt of God, and the Abuse of those Talents and Endowments which God has bestowed upon them. For when God has once given Men warning, and directed them in the way of Salvation, and they will not regard it; they must be wilfully ignorant if they will not consider, that *one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day*; and it is an Argument of his Patience and Long-suffering, that he doth not bring speedy Vengeance upon a disobedient and rebellious World: *The Lord is not slack concerning his Promise (as some men count slackness) but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night.* Now this is very well consistent and exceedingly agreeable with all the Divine Perfections, that he should give Men warning of the Evil and Danger of Sin, and afterwards leave them

them to their own choice, whether they will be Righteous and Happy, or Wicked and Miserable; and then that he should not take the first Opportunity to punish them, nor lay hold of any Advantage against them, but give them time for second Thoughts, and space for Consideration and Repentance: But if they abuse so much Patience and Loving-kindness, that he should at last come upon them, when they least think of him, with a mighty and terrible Judgment, and with a sudden and unexpected Fury. But to stand by and look on unconcern'd, and then to take Men upon such a Surprise, without giving them any Notice of it before-hand, is a thing impossible to be accounted for, and can never be reconciled with the divine Attributes. St. *Athanasius*[e] insists at large upon this Argument, and carries it so far as to prove the Necessity of the Incarnation of the Son of God from it. He urges, That it would have been unworthy of the Goodness of God to suffer all Mankind to be destroyed by the Fraud and Malice of the Devil, or by their own Fault and Negligence; and that it had been more consistent with his Wisdom and Goodness, never to have created Men, than to have suffered them thus to perish: "An "Earthly King (says he) when he has planted a Co- "lony, will not carelessly suffer his Subjects to become "Slaves to a Stranger, or to revolt from him; but he "will, by his Proclamations, admonish them of their "Duty, and often-times will send Messages to them by "his Friends; and if there be a Necessity for it, will go "to them himself, to awe them by his Presence, and "recal them to their Obedience. And (as he there "adds) "shall not God much rather be so mindful of "his Creatures, as to use some Means to reclaim them "from their evil Ways, and regain them to his Ser- "vice; especially when they must be utterly undone "for ever, unless he take care of them?

[e] S. *Athan.* de Incarnatione Verbi Dei.

[f] St. *Cyril*

[f] St. *Cyril* of *Alexandria* speaks to the same Purpose. "It was necessary, (says he) it was necessary, "that the good God should save those, who were lost, "and defeat the Malice of the Devil." And afterwards, "What then should the Creator of the Uni- "verse do? Should he leave all Men under the Power "of impure Dæmons? And suffer the Devil's Malice "to disappoint his own Designs? Should he not "stretch forth his saving Hand to those who were "down? Should he not reclaim those who were en- "snared in the grossest Wickedness? Should he not "enlighten the Minds of those who were in Dark- "ness? Should he not call back those who were "gone astray? How then could he be Good, if "when without the least Trouble, he could effectu- "ally do all this, he had yet had no Regard for us? "Why did he at first bring Men into Being and Life, "if he would extend no Mercy towards them in this "miserable State?"

It is plain then, that tho' we had never heard of such a Thing as a Miracle, or a Prophecy, or of Revealed Religion; yet from the Consideration of the State of the World, and the great Ignorance and Corruption of Human Nature, it would be reasonable to expect that God should some Way make known his Will to Mankind; and we cannot reconcile it to his Attributes, nor conceive how it should be consistent with them, for him to be an unconcerned Spectator of so much Folly and Wickedness, without taking any Care to remedy it. God cannot be obliged to force Men to obey his Commandments, and comply with his Will, but rather to leave it at their own Choice, whether they will be Happy or Miserable: But it was necessary to propose the Terms of Salvation to them,

[f] Contra Julian. l. 8. c. p. 278, 279. Edit. Lips. In eandem etiam sententiam Theodotus Ancyræ Episc. Homil. in Conc. Ephes. habit. C. T. 3. col. 1026.

to

to offer them their free Choice, to set before them Life and Death, Blessings and Cursings, and so to leave the Obstinate without all Excuse.

And this is all which I am here concerned to prove, That it is reasonble to suppose, that God would reveal himself to Mankind, and that it is not conceivable how it should be consistent with the divine Attributes for him not to do it. To own the Being of a God, and yet to deny a Providence, is so great an Absurdity, that none of the Philosophers, but *Epicurus*, were guilty of it; and this was look'd upon, in him, as amounting to the Denial of the Divine Existence. And to grant both the Being and the Providence of God, and yet to confine the Divine Care and Providence to the Bodies only, and Outward Condition of Men, and to imagine, that the Spiritual and Immortal Part of Man is disregarded or neglected by him, is no less an Absurdity than wholly to deny his Providence or his Existence; because this is to deny the most considerable and inestimable Part of Providence, which concerns our Souls, and our Eternal State; and therefore it is, by consequence, to deny the Attributes of God, and to represent him not as he is in himself, but Unwise, Unmerciful, and Unholy. To say that there is no such thing as a Divine Revelation, is no better, in effect than Atheism: For whoever can be of this Opinion, must believe only the Being of such Gods as *Epicurus* owned, that never concerned themselves with Human Affairs; which was only, in other words, to say that they were no Gods at all.

It has therefore been the constant Belief and Opinion of all Nations, that their Gods did in some way or other reveal themselves to Men; and tho' so great a Part of the World have worshipped False Gods, and have been mistaken as to the particular Revelations, which they received for Divine, yet it must proceed either from Ancient Tradition, or from the Reasonableness of the thing it self, or from both, that all the

the World should expect that the Divine Being should by some means communicate himself to Men and declare his Will to them.

CHAP. II.

The Way and Manner by which Divine Revelations may be supposed to be delivered and preserved in the World.

MAnkind had so corrupted themselves, that the Will and Laws of God could not be effectually made known to them, but by some extraordinary way of Revelation. God had manifested himself in the Creation of the World, and by the Preservation of all things from the Beginning, according to their several Natures: *For the invisible things of him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things which are made, even his eternal Power and Godhead*, Rom. i. 20. But Men had corrupted themselves even in the plainest and most fundamental Points of all Religion, and acted against all the Dictates of Natural Reason, in worshipping the vilest Parts of the Creation, rather than God himself, and, in contempt and defiance of Him, had set up even *four-footed beasts* and *creeping things* instead of Gods. How then could the Power and Authority of God be asserted, but by some extraordinary Way of Revelation; since the ordinary and constant Methods of God's revealing and manifesting himself by his Providence, in the Preservation and Government of the World, had been so far perverted and abused, as that Men were seduced to the Worship of any thing, or of every thing, rather than of God? Mankind had neither the Will nor Ability to reform themselves, and had by their own fault brought themselves under an utter Incapacity of being reformed

reformed but by some extraordinary Revelation. Natural Reason might have taught them to be less Wicked, but nothing could make them Righteous but a Revelation; and the gross Errors and Crimes, which the wisest Men had fallen into, shew the Necessity of an extraordinary Revelation from God, to instruct and inform the World. And the Ways of extraordinary Revelation are but these two, either an immediate Revelation of the Divine Will to particular Persons; or a Power of working Miracles, and of propheſying and foretelling future Events bestowed upon some, to convince others that they are inspired, or come with a Commission from God, to instruct them in what he has revealed, either by himself, or by the Message of Angels.

1. But it cannot seem requisite, that God should immediately inspire, or make an immediate Revelation to every particular Person in the World: For either he must so powerfully influence their Minds and Affections, as to take away their Choice and Freedom of acting, which would be to offer Violence to Humane Nature; or else Men would, for the most part, have gone on in their wicked Courses still, and would have denied God in their Lives, though their Understanding were never so clearly and fully convinced of his Will and Commandments, as well as of his *Eternal Power and God-head.* For, as St. *Paul* testifies, the Heathens themselves were not ignorant of the Being of God; but *when they knew God, they glorified him not as God.* No Man can be more certain of any Inspiration which he can receive, than he is of the Being of that God from whom he receives it; and therefore he who denies the Being of God, must, by consequence, deny the Truth of any such Inspiration, unless it have that powerful Impulse upon his Mind, as both to convince him and force him to an Acknowledgment at once of the Being of God, and of the Operation of his Spirit upon his Soul. And it is hard

to

to conceive how any Inspiration, which doth not over-rule the Will and Affections, as well as convince the Understanding, should be of more Efficacy upon the Minds and Lives of such Men, than the Notion of a God is. For if Men can so stifle the Notion of a God in their Minds, as to doubt whether there be any God or no, or at least to act as if there were none; no Reason can be given why they might not as well act against any Conviction which they might receive by Inspiration, or any other way of immediate Revelation, (unless it had an irresistible Effect upon them) and either take it all for Fancy and Delusion, or else so harden themselves against it, as not to be reclaimed by it: And of this we have *Balaam* for an Example, who, notwithstanding the Revelations he received from God, *loved the wages of unrighteousness*, 2 Pet. ii. 15.

But, above all Men, the profane and obstinate Unbelievers can have least Reason to expect that God should vouchsafe them an immediate Revelation. [g] The *Jews* have observed, that the Spirit of Prophecy rested only upon Men of regular and pure Affections, of gentle, and meek, and tractable Dispositions. *For the Lord will be found of them that tempt him not, and sheweth himself to such as do not distrust him, for froward thoughts separate from God: into a malicious soul Wisdom shall not enter, nor dwell in the body that is subject unto sin. For the holy Spirit of discipline will flee deceit, and remove from thoughts that are without understanding, and will not abide when unrighteousness cometh in*, Wisd. i. 2, 3, 4, 5. And to the same purpose [h] *Philo* speaks. And for this reason, when *Joseph* had the *Interpretation of Dreams* revealed to him, [i] *the Word of the Lord* is said to *try him*, or to purge, to clear, and justifie him; it being evident, that God would not in that manner

[g] Maimon. de Fundament. Legis, c. 7. § 1.
[h] Quis rerum divinarum Hæres sit. *Philo*, p. 404.
[i] *See Dr.* Hammond, *on* Psal. cv. 19.

inspire

Inspire one who had been guilty of the Crimes which *Joseph* was accused of. It is not to be imagined that God should farther reveal himself to all such in particular, by an immediate Inspiration, who have rejected all the Manifestations which he has made of himself, in the Creation and Government of the World; but, that he would reserve these immediate Revelations, as peculiar Favours, to his faithful and obedient Servants. God has sometimes, indeed, made use of wicked Men, *Balaam*, *Caiaphas*, &c. as his Instruments both in Prophecies and Miracles, to shew that they are at his Disposal, and proceed from his Bounty, not from any Worth or Merit of Men; and that he can over-rule the Designs and Intentions of the worst of Men, and make them serviceable to him, even against their Will, whenever he pleaseth: But then these are peculiar Cases, in which these Gifts were afforded for particular Ends, and for the Benefit of others, and the Men themselves were never the better for them. But as for the Disobedient, St. *Paul* acquaints us how, in the general Dispensations of his Providence, God dealt with them; *God gave them over to a reprobate Mind*, Rom. i. 28. And he there sets down a Catalogue of those Sins which were the Consequence of this Reprobation. The Apostle all along maintains, that they had so much Knowledge of God, as to render them without Excuse; and that they would make no Improvement of it, to the attaining the Knowledge of the Laws of Nature first, and then of his Revealed Will; and it was the just Judgment of God, to *give them up to their own hearts lusts*, to abandon them to the Tyranny of their Sins, since they would take no Notice of his Works, and would not *abide his Counsels:* And it must needs have been highly inconsistent, to send immediate Revelations, or afford particular Inspiration to all such Men as are there described. *God's Spirit will not always strive with man*; but he withdraws his ordinary Grace from those that

abuse it, and therefore it can never be presumed he should confer higher Favours upon them.

If Men will believe upon reasonable Motives, they have sufficient Means of Salvation allowed them; but if they will not believe without some immediate Revelation, they are never like to have that in this World, but in the next God will reveal himself with Terror and Vengeance upon all the *workers of iniquity*. God doth, both by Nature and by Revelation, provide for the Necessities, for the Welfare and Happiness, but never for the Humours and Peevishness of Men; and those who will not be saved, but according to some new Way and Method of their own Invention, must be miserable without remedy. I doubt not but the greatest Infidels would own, that if Christ should personally speak to them in a Voice from Heaven, or appear to them upon Earth, and grant them that Conviction which he once granted to St. *Thomas*, or St. *Paul*, they would believe in him, as these Apostles did. But they would do well to consider what Reason there can be, why so much Favour should be shewn to those who reject with Scorn and Derision all the Tenders of Grace, and Means of Salvation; and what Obligation God can be under, to save them in such a manner as themselves shall prescribe, who will not be saved in his Way, and according to the Terms of the Gospel. And if God should vouchsafe to make some immediate Revelation of himself to these insolent Offenders, and Blasphemers of his Name and Authority; how can we be assured, that they would be converted? Would they not rather find out some Pretence to persuade themselves that it was no real Revelation, but the effect of Natural Agents, or of Melancholy, and of a disturbed Imagination? For those who have so long not only rejected (that were a modest thing) but derided and reviled *Moses* and the Prophets, nay, the Apostles, and our Saviour himself, *would not believe, though one should rise from the dead.*

dead. They might be terrified, perhaps, for the present, but they would soon stifle those Apprehensions with their accustomed Arguments for Atheism and Infidelity. I hope to prove, in this Discourse, That all but Atheists must be convinced of the Truth of the Revelations delivered down to us in the Old and New Testament, if they will but take the pains to consider them; and Atheists could never be convinced of any Revelation whatsoever: For Men must first believe that there is a God, before they can believe that he reveals himself either to themselves or others.

But besides their being ineffectual, and never to be expected by such as this Conceit must be calculated for; this Supposition, of immediate Revelations to every Man in particular, would fill the World with continual Impostures and Delusions. For if every one had a Revelation made to himself, every one might pretend to others what he pleased; and we know, from the Example of the Prophet, who was sent to prophesie against the Altar of *Bethel*, that a Man may be deluded by the Pretence of a Revelation made to another, against an express Revelation made to himself; and we may conclude that this would often happen, from what we every day experience: For if Men can be perverted by the Arts and Insinuations of others, against their own Reason and Judgment, they might as well be prevailed upon to act against a Revelation made to them, tho' Revelations were as common and familiar a thing amongst Men, as Reason it self is.

So that immediate Revelations to every particular Man would have been needless and superfluous; they would have been unsuitable to the Majesty and Honour of God; and they would have been ineffectual to the Ends for which they must be supposed to be designed, and would have given many more Pretences to Impostures than there are now in the World.

But there were many Considerations, even in a wicked World, to move the Compassions of Infinite

Mercy towards Mankind: Though all were under the Dominion of Sin, and unable of themselves to become righteous, yet some were more wicked than others; great Numbers of Men were carried away to commit heinous Impieties, through their own Ignorance, and the Example of others; and though the Heathen were never without Excuse, yet they were chiefly inexcusable, because God had always a Revealed Will, to the Knowledge of which, he would by some Means or other have brought them, if they had lived according to their Natural Knowledge of him, and of their Duty towards him; and though the Heathen had many Opportunities of becoming acquainted with the Revealed Will of God, yet much Allowance was to be made for the Times of Ignorance before the Gospel. God was pleased to reveal himself from time to time; and at last, by the Gospel, in a more wonderful and evident Manner than ever he had done before, and to afford Men fuller means of Conviction, and greater Measures of Grace to comply with it, and *work out their own salvation.* And God has made these Revelations of his Will, by enduing certain Men with a Power of Prophesying, and Working Miracles, who were to declare his Will to others, and to certify the rest of the World that it was indeed his Will and Commandments which they delivered.

And this was the most proper Method, and most worthy of God. For, as I have proved, God would not create Mankind, and then take no farther Care of them; since, in the State of Innocence, they better deserved his Care, and have ever after stood in so much need of it, and could at no Time be happy, either in this World or the next, without it: And it cannot with any Reason be objected, by those who have never so great a Mind to cavil at the Terms and Means of Salvation by the Gospel, That God should apply himself to every Person by a particular Revelation; both

both becauſe ſo much Condeſcenſion and Indulgence would be ill beſtowed upon thoſe who have ſo little deſerved it; and becauſe it would have no better effect than Prophecies and Miracles have had towards the Converſion of Men; but a very ill one, in affording Pretences to all Sorts of Impoſtures: And where two ſeveral Means are alike ſuitable to any End, no Man, ſurely, will preſume to preſcribe to Almighty God, and ſay, that he ought to have uſed one rather than the other; much leſs when one is inconvenient, and the other the only proper Means to be uſed.

II. I proceed therefore to ſhew, That Prophecies and Miracles are the moſt fitting and proper Means for God to diſcover and reveal himſelf to the World by. It is evident, that they are not accompanied with thoſe Inconveniences, with which immediate Revelations would have been; there is no Prophecy, nor Miracle, but it has the deſigned Effect upon many Perſons; the Majeſty and Honour of God is not expoſed to the Scorn of every profane and obſtinate Offender; and there is as effectual Care taken to prevent Impoſtures, as poſſibly could have been. And as Prophecies and Miracles have none of the Inconveniences which immediate Revelation would have had; ſo I ſhall ſhew, that they have all the Advantage and Uſefulneſs which it can be ſuppoſed that immediate Revelations would have had, if they had been granted to every Perſon in particular. All that any immediate Revelation could do, is to afford Men the Means of Conviction, and Aſſurance that the Revelation proceeds from God, as certainly as that God himſelf is: And this Prophecies and Miracles do.

1. Concerning *Prophecies*, it is obſervable, That the Oracles and Lying Divinations with which the Devil has impoſed upon the World, ſhew, That it is natural for Men to expect that God ſhould reveal

himself by Prophecies: Which made them so prone to receive false Prophecies from their false Gods. And this may teach us, That True Prophecies are to be expected from the True God. Many Prophecies are of that Nature, that none but God Omniscient could be the Author of them; and these, in their Accomplishment, must carry an indisputable Evidence of Divine Revelation along with them. Such are the Predictions of Things to be fulfilled many Ages afterwards, which in the fulfilling, depend upon the Counsels and Determinations of free Agents; and Predictions of the Sins of Men, which they could not be determin'd to, but by their own Choice. It is above the Capacity of Human Understanding, to conceive how it is possible, that Things should be foreseen so long before either the Actions or the Agents themselves have any Existence, or how Contingencies can be the Object of Infallible Prescience: And therefore, for God to foretel Things of this nature by his Prophets, is a most proper and certain Way of Revelation; because it is above the Power of any Finite Being to do the like. It is the Prerogative of him that *formeth the mountains, and createth the wind, to declare unto man what is his thought: The Lord, the God of Hosts is his name*, Amos iv. 13. For which reason, the False Gods are challeng'd to foretel these Things; *Shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are Gods*, Isa. xlii. 23.

But because Things foretold may sometimes come to pass by chance, or it may be in the Power of Evil Spirits to foretel them when they are in Design and Agitation, and just ready for Action; or to discern Things done at distant Places, and to make probable Guesses, which may prove true, from the various Circumstances of Affairs which they observe in the World: We may therefore be assured, from the Consideration of the Divine Attributes of Good-

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ness and Truth, that God will not suffer false Religions to be imposed upon the World, under his own Name, by Diabolical Predictions, without affording Means to discover them to be such. *When a Prophet speaketh in the Name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the Prophet hath spoken it presumptuously, thou shalt not be afraid of him*, Deut. xviii. 22. This is the Mark of Distinction between a False and a True Prophet, That whatever the latter foretold in the Name of the Lord, should come to pass; but whatever the first foretold in his Name, should not come to pass; which implies, that God will disappoint such Predictions, as he threatens, *Ezek.* xiv. 9. and not suffer them to come to pass; otherwise, the coming to pass of Things foretold, could be no certain Mark of a True Prophet, because they might come to pass by chance.

The Prophet which propheseth of peace, when the word of the Prophet shall come to pass, then shall the Prophet be known that the Lord hath truly sent him, Jer. xxviii. 9. [k] *Maimonides* delivers it, not only as his own Opinion, but as the received Doctrine of the *Rabbins*, that if a Prophet foretold prosperous Events, and they did not come to pass, it was a convincing Argument of a False Prophet: But if he threaten'd Judgments, tho' they were not inflicted, he might be a True Prophet. Which Doctrine they advanc'd from a Misinterpretation of the Words of *Jeremiah* now mention'd. For the False Prophet *Hananiah*, having declar'd in the Name of the Lord, that *Jeconiah* and all the Captives of *Judah*, with the Vessels of the Temple, should within two Years be brought back from *Babylon* to *Jerusalem*; *Jeremiah*

[k] Maim. de Fundamentis Legis, c. 10. § 6, 7. Præf. in Seder Zeraim, p. 8.

tells him, that he heartily prayed, that it might please God, that this should prove true; but that it was no new Thing to prophesy of Calamities that were to befal a People, which was the Thing that had raised so great a Hatred against him. *The Prophets that have been before me, and before thee of old, prophesied both against many Countries, and against great Kingdoms, of War, and of Evil, and of Pestilence. The Prophet which prophesieth of Peace, when the Word of the Prophet shall come to pass, then shall the Prophet be known that the Lord hath truly sent him*, Jer. xxviii. 8, 9. He speaks here of Peace, with relation to this particular Case in Question at that Time, and says, that the Event would shew who was the true Prophet: But he lays down no Rule to detect false Prophets, by the Prediction of Prosperous, rather than of Adverse Events; which is directly contrary to God's express Declaration by him: *At what instant I shall speak concerning a Nation, and concerning a Kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it; if that Nation against whom I have pronounced, turn from their Evil, I will repent of the Evil, that I thought to do unto them. And at what instant I shall speak concerning a Nation, and concerning a Kingdom, to build and to plant it; if it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the Good wherewith I said I would benefit them*, chap. xviii. 7, 8, 9, 10. And the righteous Man, that committed Iniquity, was to have no Benefit from the Promises made to him; as the wicked Man, upon his Repentance, was not to suffer the Punishment denounced against him, *Ezek.* xxxiii. 13, 18. So manifestly contrary is this Rule of the Rabbins for the discerning of false from true Prophets, to the express Words of Scripture; and *Maimonides* confesses it failed at the Destruction of

[1] Maim. de Fund. Leg. c. 10. § 7.

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the first Temple. But if no visible Alteration be made in the Case, either by Repentance on the one hand, or by Disobedience on the other; the Fulfilling of Prophecies, whether they contain Threatnings or Promises, is a certain Sign of a True Prophet, and when the Event doth not answer the Prediction, this is as sure a Sign that it was delivered by a false Prophet. But if the Prophecy were not pretended to be in the Name of the True God, but were given out with a professed Design to entice Men to the Worship of False Gods, then God might suffer it to be fulfilled, to prove his People, *Deut.* xiii. 1, 2, 3. For this was consistent with God's Truth and Goodness, especially after Warning given, and after so clear a Revelation, both by Prophecies and Miracles: If any Man, in this Case would be seduced by any Wonder, or Prophecy, to follow other Gods, it must be great Perverseness in him. But when Prophecies are delivered by many Prophets, in divers Ages, and different Places, all teaching the same Doctrine, and tending to the same End and Design in their several Revelations, and that End is the Discouragement of all Wickedness, and the Maintenance of all Virtue and true Religion, these Prophecies have all that can be requisite to assure us that they are from God; and God, by suffering them to be fulfilled, and to pass so long in the World, under his own Name, and with all the Characters of his Authority upon them, has given us all possible Assurance that they are his, and engaged us, in Honour to his Divine Attributes, to believe that they really are by his Authority.

And the Certainty of Prophecies being thus grounded upon the Divine Attributes, besides the direct Evidence which they afford to whatever is delivered by them, they add an undeniable Confirmation to those Miracles which have been foretold, and are wrought at the Time, and in the Manner, and by

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the Persons foretold by the Prophets; and the Prophecies likewise receive as great a Confirmation from such Miracles. For *Prophecies* and *Miracles*, which are singly a sufficient Evidence of Divine Revelation, do mutually support and confirm each other; and hereby we have all the Assurance that can be expected of any Divine Revelation: And therefore, as *Prophecy* is in it self a most fitting and proper Way of Revelation; so, in conjunction with *Miracles*, it is the most certain Way that can be desir'd.

2. The Suitableness and Efficacy of *Miracles*, to prove a Divine Revelation. It is an extravagant Thing to conceive, that God should exclude himself from the Works of his own Creation; or, that he should establish them upon such inviolable Laws, as not to alter them upon some Occasions, when he foresaw it would be requisite to do it: For unless the Course of Nature had been thus alterable, it would have been defective in regard to one great End for which it was design'd; *viz.* it would have fail'd of being serviceable to the Designs of Providence upon such Occasions. The same infinite Wisdom which contrived the Laws for the Order and Course of Nature, contrived them so, as to make them alterable, when it would be necessary for God, by suspending the Powers, or interrupting the Course of Nature, to manifest his extraordinary Will and Power; and by the same Decree by which he at first established them, he subjected them to such Alterations, as his Wisdom foresaw would be necessary.

We can as little doubt, but that He who made the World, has the sole Power and Authority over it; and that nothing can be done in it, but by his Direction and Influence, or at least by his Permission; and that the Frame and Order of Nature which he at first appointed, can at no Time be alter'd, but for great Ends and Purposes. He is not given

given to change, as Men are, and can never be disappointed in his Eternal Purposes and Designs. But when any thing comes to pass above the Course of Nature, and contrary to it, in Confirmation of a Revelation, which, for the Importance and Excellency of the Subject of it, and in all other Respects, is most worthy of God, we may be sure that this is his doing; and there is still farther Evidence of it, if this Revelation were prophesy'd of before, by Prophets who foretold that it should be confirm'd by Miracle. As, when Men born blind, receiv'd their Sight; when others were cured of the most desperate Diseases, by a Touch, or at a Distance; when the Dead were raised, and the Devils cast out; these were evident Signs of a Divine Power and Presence, which gave Testimony to the Doctrine deliver'd by those by whom such Miracles were wrought, and the Divine Commission and Authority was produced for what they did and taught. For what could be more satisfactory and convincing to Men, or more worthy of God, than to force the Devils themselves to confess and proclaim his Coming? to cause the most insensible things in Nature to declare his Power, by giving way, as it were, and starting back in great Confusion and Disorder, at his more immediate and peculiar Presence, to inform Men that the God of Nature was there? This gave Testimony to the Things reveal'd, and challeng'd the Belief of all Men, in a Language more powerful than any Human Voice, whilst God shew'd forth his Glory, and made known his Will, by exercising his Sovereignty over Nature, in making the whole Creation bow, and tremble and obey. All which was perform'd according to express Prophecies concerning Christ, that there might be a visible Concurrence both of Prophecies and Miracles in Testimony of him. And this Dispensation of Miracles was admirably fitted to propagate that Religion which concern'd

cerned the Poor, as well as the Rich, the Unlearned, as well as the Learned. Miracles were suitable to the Simplicity of the Gospel, and to the universal Design of it: For they are equally adapted to awaken the Attention, and command the Assent of Men of all Conditions and Capacities; they are obvious to the most Ignorant, and may satisfy the Wisest, and confute or silence the Cavils of the most Captious and Contentious.

And this is what all the World ever expected, That God should reveal himself to Men, by working somewhat above the Course of Nature. All Mankind have believed, that this is the Way of Intercourse between Heaven and Earth; and therefore there never was any of the false Religions, but it was pretended to have been confirmed by something miraculous. We may appeal to the Sense of all Nations for the Authority of Miracles to attest the Truth of Religion: For whenever any Thing happened extraordinary, they always imagined something supernatural in it; they expected that Miracles should be wrought for the Proof of any Thing that had but the Name of Religion; and no false Religion could have gained Belief and Credit in any Age or Nation, but under the Pretence of them.

The only Difficulty therefore will be, to know how to distinguish True Miracles from False; or those which have been wrought for the Confirmation of the True Religion, from such as have been done, or are pretended to have been done, in behalf of False Religions.

But here it must be observed, That it is not necessary, in this Controversy, that we should be able to determine what the Power of Spirits is, or how far it extends, and what Works can proceed only from the immediate Power of God: It is sufficient that we know, that God presides over All; that Good Spirits act in constant Subjection and Obedience

dience to him; that Evil Spirits act for evil Ends; that Good Spirits will not impose upon Men, and that he will not suffer the Evil to do it, under any Pretence of his own Authority, without affording means to discover the Delusion. And the Question here is not concerning any strange Work whereof God is not alledged to be the Author, but concerning such as are wrought with a professed Design to establish Religion in his Name. Suppose then that there have been many Wonders wrought in the World, which exceed all Human Power, and which yet we know not to what other Power to ascribe: This makes no Difficulty in the present Case; because here, not only the Works themselves, but the Design and Tendency of them is to be considered. For Instance, Whether the Miracles reported to have been done by *Vespasian*, were true or false, by a Divine or a Diabolical Power, they are of no Consequence to us; he established no new Doctrine, and pretended to no Divine Authority, but doubted the Possibility of his working them: And supposing them true, and by a Divine Power, the most that can be said of them, is, that as God mentioned *Cyrus* by Name to be the Deliverer of the Jews, so he might by Miracle signalize this Prince who was to destroy them. But the Miracles of our Saviour and his Apostles were wrought with this declared Purpose and Design, That they were to give Evidence to the Religion which they were sent from God to introduce, as necessary to the Salvation of Mankind.

Having premised this, I must resume what was before observed concerning the Means by which false Prophecies might be detected. It has been already proved from the *Notion of a God*, that there must be some *Divine Revelation*; and it has been shewn that *Prophecies* and *Miracles* are the most fit and proper way of *Revelation*, and that Way which Men have ever expected to receive *Revelations* by. If then there have

have been False Prophecies and Miracles, they must be supposed to have been either before, or at the same time, or after those Prophecies and Miracles by which the True Religion was delivered; if before, or at the same time, then the same Divine Wisdom and Goodness which obliges God to reveal his Will to Mankind, must oblige him to take care that the Impostures of those False Prophecies and Miracles by some means might have been discovered. But there is great Reason to believe, that true Revelations should be first made to Men, before God would suffer them to be tempted with false Ones; and if the false were after the true Revelations, then the true Revelations themselves are that by which we ought to judge of all others.

But to speak more particularly of *Miracles* which are the present Subject. It is inconsistent with the Infinite Truth, and Honour, and Goodness, and Mercy of God, to suffer Man to be deluded by false Miracles, wrought under a Pretence of his own Authority, without any Possibility of discovering the Imposture: And therefore if we should suppose, there had pass'd any Time before the Discovery of his Will to Mankind, he could not suffer Men, but through their own Fault to be imposed upon by such Miracles; but either by the false and wicked Doctrines which they were brought to promote and establish, as Idolatry, Uncleanness, Murthers, *&c.* or by some other Token of Imposture, they might have been undeceived: And both in the Old and New Testament God has given us Warning against false Miracles, *Deut.* xiii. 1. *Mat.* xxiv. 24. *Gal.* i. 8. 2 *Thess.* ii. 9. so that we may be assured, that we are to give no Credit to any Miracle that can be wrought to confirm any other Doctrine than what we find in the Scriptures; and if we can but be certify'd, that they were true Miracles which gave Testimony and Evidence to them, we need concern ourselves about no other.

And

And the Miracles by which the Scriptures are confirmed and authorized must be true; because there is no precedent Divine Revelation which they contradict, nor any immoral or false Doctrine which they deliver, nor any thing else contained in them whereby they can be proved to be false: And in this Case, that which all the Wit and Understanding of Man cannot prove to be false, must be true, or else God would suffer his own Name and Authority to be usurped and abused, and Mankind to be imposed upon in a thing of infinite Consequence, without any Possibility of discovering the Imposture, which it is contrary to the Divine Attributes for him to permit; but either by the Works themselves, or by the End and Design of them, or by some Means or other, the Honour, and Wisdom, and Mercy of God is concerned to detect all such Impostures. If Miracles be wrought to introduce the Worship of other Gods, besides him, whom Reason, as well as Scripture, assures us to be the only True God; if they be done to seduce Men to immoral Doctrines and Practices; if they be performed to contradict the Religion already confirmed by Miracles, in which nothing of this nature could possibly be discovered; if never so astonishing Miracles be wrought for such ill Designs as these, they are not to be regarded, but rejected with that Constancy which becomes a Man who will act according to the Principles of Natural Reason and Religion. But when Miracles were perform'd, which, both for the End and Design of them, as well as for the Manner and Circumstances of their Performance, had all the Credibility that any Miracle could have, if it were really wrought by God's immediate Power to confirm a Revelation; if these Miracles have been foretold by Prophecies, (as, on the other side, the Prophecies were fulfilled by the Miracles) if they were done publickly before all sorts of Men, and that often, and by many Men successively, for divers Ages together, and all

all agreed in the same Doctrine and Design; if neither the Miracles themselves, nor the Doctrines which are attested by them, can be discovered to have any Deceit or Defect in them, but be most excellent and divine, and most worthy of God; in such a Case we have all the Evidence for the Truth of the Miracles, and of the Religion which they were wrought to establish, that we can have for the Being of God himself. For if these Miracles and this Religion be not from God, we must suppose either that God cannot, or that he will not so reveal himself by Miracle to the World, as to distinguish his own Revelation from Impostures; both which Suppositions are contrary to the Divine Attributes; contrary to God's Omnipotence, because he can do all things, and therefore can exceed the Power of all Finite Beings; and contrary to his Honour, and Wisdom, and Goodness, because these require both that he should reveal himself to the World, and that he should do it by Miracles, in such a manner, as to make it evident which is his Revelation. But if he both can and will put such a Distinction between False Miracles and True, as that Men shall not, except it be by their own fault, be seduced by false Miracles; then that Religion which is confirmed by Miracles, concerning which nothing can be discovered to be either impious or false, must be the True Religion. For we have seen, that there must be some Revealed Religion, and that this Religion must be revealed by Miracle; and we have the Goodness, and Truth, and Justice of God engaged, that we should not be imposed upon by false Miracles, without being able to discern the Imposture: And therefore that Religion which both by its Miracles, and Doctrine, and Worship, appears to be Divine, and could not be proved to be false, if it were so, must certainly be true; because the Goodness and Honour of God is concerned, that Mankind, in a Matter of this Consequence, should not be deceived, without

out their own Fault or Neglect, by Impostures vented under his own Name and Authority. Upon which account, the Sin against the Holy Ghost, in ascribing the Miracles wrought by *Christ*, to *Beelzebub*, was so heinous above all other Crimes; this being to reject the utmost Means that can be used for Man's Salvation, and in Effect to deny the Attributes and very Being of God. The Sum of this Argument is, That though Miracles are a most fit and proper Means to prove the Truth of Religion, yet they are not only to be considered alone, but in Conjunction with other Proofs; and that they must necessarily be true Miracles, or Miracles wrought to establish the true Religion, when the Religion upon the account whereof they are wrought cannot be discovered to be false, either by any Defect in the Miracles, or by any other Means, but has all the Marks and Characters of Truth. Because God would not suffer the Evidence of Miracles, and all other Proofs, to concur to the Confirmation of a false Religion, beyond all Possibility of discovering it to be so.

III. How *Divine Revelations* may be supposed to be preserved in the World. It is reasonable to suppose, that Divine Revelations should be committed to Writing, that they might be preserved for the Benefit of Mankind, and delivered down to Posterity, and that a more than ordinary Providence should be concerned in their Preservation. For whatever has been said by some, of the Advantage of Oral Tradition, for the Conveyance of Doctrines, beyond that of Writing, is so notoriously fanciful and strained, that it deserves no serious Answer. For 'till Men shall think it safest to make Wills, and bequeath and purchase Estates by Word of Mouth, rather than by Instruments in Writing, it is in vain to deny that this is the best and surest Way of Conveyance that can be taken: So the common Sense of Mankind declares, and so the Experience of the World finds it to be in Things which

Men take all possible Care about; and it is too manifest, and much to be lamented, that Men are more solicitous about Things Temporal, than about Eternal; which affords too evident a Confutation of all the Pretences of the Infallibility of Oral Tradition, upon this Ground, That the Subject-Matter of it are things upon which the Eternal Happiness or Misery of Mankind depends. Besides, the Obligations and the Motives are the same to transmit, with all Care and Faithfulness, the Terms of Salvation to Posterity by Writing, that they would be, if they were to be transmitted by Oral Tradition: The only Difference is, that Writing is the surest Way of Conveyance; not that it wants any Advantage, which can be pretended by Oral Tradition. *And the Lord said unto* Moses, *write this for a memorial in a Book*, Exod. xvii. 14. *Now go, write it before them in a Table, and note it in a Book, that it may be for the time to come, for ever and ever*, Isa. xxx. 8.

IV. It is requisite that a *Divine Revelation* should be of great Antiquity: Because, upon the same Grounds that we cannot think that God would not at all reveal himself to Mankind, we cannot suppose that he would suffer the World to continue long under a State of Corruption and Ignorance, without taking some care to remedy it, by putting Men into a Capacity of knowing and practising the Duties of Virtue and Religion.

V. Another Requisite of a *Divine Revelation*, is, that it should be fully promulged and published to the World, for the general Good and Benefit of Mankind, that it may attain the Ends for which a Revelation must be designed.

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THE REASONABLENESS and CERTAINTY OF THE Christian Religion.

PART II.

FROM what has been already discourſed, it appears, that theſe things are requiſite in a Divine Revelation: I. *Antiquity.* II. *Promulgation.* III. A ſufficient Evidence, by *Prophecies* and *Miracles*, in Proof of its Authority. IV. The Doctrines delivered by Divine Revelation muſt be *Righteous* and *Holy*, conſiſtent with the Divine Attributes, and ſuitable to their Condition to whom it is made, and every way ſuch as may anſwer the Deſign of a Revelation.

CHAP. I.

The Antiquity of the Scriptures.

AS it is evident from the Divine Attributes, that God would not ſo wholly neglect Mankind, as to take no care to diſcover and reveal his Will and Commandments to the World; ſo, when there was

so great a Necessity of Divine Revelation, in order to the Happiness of Mankind, both in this World and the next, it is not to be believed that he would defer it so long, before he made known his Will, as 'till the Date of the first Antiquities amongst the Heathen. It cannot be denied, that some Books of the Scripture are much the Ancientest Books of Religion in the World; for it were in vain to pretend that the Works in this Kind (or indeed in any other) of any Heathen Author, can be compared with the *Pentateuch*, for Antiquity. And the Antiquity of these Books is one considerable Circumstance, whereby we may be convinced that they are of Divine Revelation. For if God would not suffer the World to continue long in a State of Ignorance and Wickedness without a Revelation, we may conclude, that he would not suffer the Memory of it to be lost; and therefore a Book of this Nature, which is so much the ancientest in the World, being constantly received as a Divine Revelation, carries great Evidence with it that it is Authentick. For the first Revelation, as hath been proved, is to be the *Criterion* of all that follow; and God would not suffer the ancientest Book of Religion in the World to pass all along under the Notion and Title of a *Revelation*, without causing some Discovery to be made of the Imposture, if there were any in it; much less would he preserve it by a particular and signal Providence for so many Ages. It is a great Argument for the Truth of the Scriptures, that they have stood the Test, and received the Approbation of so many Ages, and still retain their Authority, though so many ill Men, in all Ages, have made it their Endeavour to disprove them: But it is still a farther Evidence in behalf of them, that God has been pleased to shew so remarkable a Providence in their Preservation.

The Account we have of Divine Revelation, in the Writings of *Moses*, is from the Creation of the World; for

for he relates the Intercourse which from the Beginning passed between God and Man; and this might be delivered down, either by Writing or by Tradition, 'till *Moses*'s Time. For *Methuselah* living with *Adam*, and *Shem* with *Methuselah*, *Isaac* with *Shem*, and *Amram* the Father of *Moses* living with the Patriarchs, the Sons of *Jacob*, the History of the Creation, and of the Manifestations which God had been pleased to make of himself to their Fore-fathers, could not be unknown to that Age: Such a Posterity could not but be zealous to preserve the Memory of so great Honours and Blessings; and their living in *Goshen*, separate from the *Ægyptians*, did much contribute to the Preservation of their Antiquities; for there they lived in Expectation of a Deliverance, and of seeing the Prophecies fulfilled, that were made to their Fore-fathers concerning it. The famous Prediction made to *Abraham*, Gen. xv. 16. could not be forgotten in so few Generations; for the coming out of *Ægypt*, was, as it was there foretold it should be, in the Fourth Generation, reckoning from *Isaac*, the first of the promised Seed, to *Moses* exclusively, *Exod.* vi. 16, 18, 20.

Moses seems to refer to some Things that happened near the Beginning of the World, as well known in his own Time, as *Gen.* iv. 22. where he says, *The Sister of Tubal-Cain* was *Naamah:* For no probable Account can be given, why *Naamah* should be mentioned, but because her Name was then well known among the *Israelites*, for some Reason which it doth not concern us to be acquainted with, but which served to confirm to them the rest of the Relation. Some have delivered, that *Naamah*, by her Beauty, enticed the *Sons of God*, or the Posterity of *Seth*, to commit Idolatry, *Gen.* vi. 2. And so, *Gen.* xi. 29. we read, that *Haran* was the Father of *Iscah*, as well as of *Milcah*; and *Gen.* xxxvi. 24. *This was that Anah*

that found the Mules (or the [a] Hot-Baths, or that fell upon the [b] *Emins*, or Giants, mention'd, *Deut.* ii. 10, 11. however the Word he understood) *in the wilderness, as he fed the Asses of* Zibeon *his Father.* In the Catalogue of the Kings of *Edom*, none of their Wives are mentioned, but the Wife of *Hadar*, and we are told, that her Name was *Mahetabel*, and that she was *the Daughter of* Matred, *the Daughter of* Merahab, Gen. xxxvi. 39. Why such Particularity, but because these Names were then famous? These, and such-like Particulars, must have been preserv'd and commonly known among the *Israelites*, and were therefore inserted to serve as *Epocha*'s and Notes of Remembrance, for the better understanding the rest of the History. The Story and Manner of Life of *Nimrod* was convey'd in a Proverb; *Wherefore it is said, Even as* Nimrod *the mighty Hunter before the Lord*, Gen. x. 9. The Remembrance of *Abraham*'s offering up his Son, was retain'd both by the Name of the Place, and by a Proverbial Saying, *And* Abraham *called the name of that place* Jehovah-jireh: *as it is said to this day, In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen*, Gen. xxii. 14. And there is no doubt to be made, but that there were other the like Remembrances of the most Remarkable Transactions. Reasons are assign'd of the Names of *Adam* and *Eve*, of *Cain*, and *Seth*, and *Noah*, of *Melchisedek*, of *Abraham* and *Sarah*, and *Isaac* and *Jacob*. The Names of all the Patriarchs imported something remarkable in their Signification, and were design'd to preserve the Remembrance of what had come to pass. The Names of Places likewise were appointed for Memorials, *Gen.* xix. 22. xxviii. 19. xxxi. 49. xxxii. 30. And the Sepulchres of the

[a] Interp. Vulgat *Invenit Aquas Calidas.*

[b] *Invenit Gigantes in Solitudine*, Chald. Paraph. Ὃς ἐυρεν τοὺς Ἰαμειν ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ, LXX. Interpr.

Dead

Dead were historical Monuments for the Information of Posterity. *Abraham* purchased *Macpelah* for a Burying-place; and when *Jacob* bury'd *Rachel* near *Bethlehem*, he erected a Pillar to her Memory, *Gen.* xxiii. 17. xxxv. 20. It may perhaps seem strange to some Readers, that the digging of Wells should be particularly taken notice of, and that the Names given them should be so carefully recorded by *Moses*, *Genes.* xvi. 14. xxi. 31. xxiv. 62. xxv. 11. xxvi. 20, 21, 33. But as Wells in those Countries were more rare, and of more necessary Use and Benefit, than in colder and moister Climates; so they serv'd as so many Memorials to Posterity, of what had befallen their Fore-fathers, and the Names of them stand register'd by *Moses*, in Confirmation of the Truth of what he wrote. But the Flood being the greatest *Epocha* of Time, the History of this is above all deliver'd with most Exactness: The Dimensions of the Ark, the Height of the Waters, and not only the Year, but the Month and Day, when the Waters were brought upon the Earth; and when it became dry, are punctually set down, *Gen.* vi. 15. vii. 11, 20. viii. 13, 14.

Josephus has prov'd, that Authors of all Nations agree, that in ancient Times Men liv'd to the Age of about a Thousand Years; and some are known to have liv'd to a very great Age in latter Times. But however, it had been more serviceable to *Moses*'s Purpose, if he had had any other Design but Truth, that Men should not have been so long liv'd. For when he had so much Scope for his Invention, (if it had been an Invention of his own) he would never have fix'd the Creation of the World at the distance of so few Generations from the time in which he wrote, but would rather have made the Generations of Men more, and their Lives shorter, that so he might the better have concealed his Fictions in obscure and uncertain Relations, which must be suppos'd to

be delivered through so many Hands down to that Age. Of the Ten Patriarchs before the Flood, all but *Noah* lived soon enough to see *Adam* and the other Patriarchs their Progenitors; and *Noah* himself was old enough to know all of them, but *Adam*, *Seth*, and *Enoch*. The Distance of Time from the Flood to *Moses* was more than it is from the Conquest to the present Age, but half of this Time *Noah* himself was living: And therefore allowing for the greater Length of Mens Lives in those Ages than in ours, the Time when *Moses* wrote cannot be computed at so great a Distance from the Flood, as we are at from the Reformation. But is it possible to make any Man of tolerable Sense, amongst us, believe that *Henry* VIII. was the first King of *England?* That there was a Deluge in his Time which swept away all the Inhabitants of this Island, and of the whole World besides, but some seven or eight Persons, and that all whom we now see were born of them? And yet this, as ridiculous as it seems, is no more absurd than *Moses*'s Account of the Creation and the Flood, must have been to those of his own Time, if it were false.

For it is very reasonable to think, as *Josephus* informs us, that Writing was in use before the Flood: And it is not improbable, as some have conjectured, that the History of the Creation, and the rest of the Book of *Genesis*, was, for the Substance of it, delivered down to *Moses*'s Time in Verse, which was the most easy to be remembered, and the most ancient of all Sorts of Writing, and was at first chiefly used for Matters of History, and consisted of plain Narration, without much of Art or Ornament. We read of Instrumental Musick, *Gen.* iv. 21. before the Flood; and Vocal Musick being so much more Natural than Instrumental, it is likely that Poetry was of as great Antiquity, both in their Hymns and Praises of God, and as a Help to their Memories, which

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are the two Ends to which *Moses* applies his own Songs or Poems, *Exod.* xv. *Deut.* xxxii. If it be thought, that there was no Writing before the Flood, because there is no Account of the Invention of it, though the Inventors of other inferior Arts be mentioned; this rather proves the contrary, and that it was coeval with Mankind, or was the Invention of *Adam*. It is not probable, that in so long a Life, he should find out nothing for the use of himself and his Posterity, tho' no Invention be attributed to him; and Writing is so necessary, that the World could very ill subsist without it for between Sixteen and Seventeen Hundred Years. The *Grecians*, and other Nations, have recorded the first Inventors, as they supposed, of Letters, as those who best deserved a Memorial in History. But [c] *Pliny* is of Opinion, that the *Assyrian* Letters, by which we are to understand the ancient *Hebrew*, or *Samaritan* Characters, have been from the Beginning of the World. And since there is no other Mention amongst the ancientest *Jewish* Writers, but that they were before the Flood, some of them also ascribing them to *Adam*, this implies that they were of the greatest Antiquity, and the Time of their Invention is no more known than that of Ploughing and Sowing, and other necessary Arts, which were from the Beginning of the World.

But though it should be supposed, that before the Flood they had not the same Conveniencies for preserving the Remembrance of Things past, which we have had since, yet Things of this Nature could never be imposed upon the Generality of Men; and if they had less means of conveying Things past to Posterity, they had fewer Things to convey; and all their Histories being concerning the Ancestors of their own Families, they were easily remembered; and however short and imperfect, they could not be so

[c] Plin. Hist. l. 7. c. 56. cum Harduin. Not.

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defective, as that Men should generally be so grossly ignorant as to swallow such Impostures: They had One Day in Seven purposely set apart for the Praise and Worship of God, and the Commemoration of his Mercies vouchsafed to Mankind; and they, who had Proverbial Remembrances of *Nimrod*, the third from *Noah*, could not be ignorant of *Noah* himself, and of the Flood in his Time.

In so few Generations of Men as had past, by reason of the long Lives of the Patriarchs, it was impossible for *Moses* to impose upon those of his own Age in things so memorable as the Creation of the World, and the Flood, and the Destruction of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, &c. But when, so long after the Flood, the Sons of *Noah* were dispersed into so far distant Places of the Earth, and their Manners and Customs were different, and their Lives shorter, it became necessary, that a true and lasting Account of those things should stand recorded in a Book of infallible Credit and Authority, for the Benefit of future Ages, lest, in process of time, the Remembrance of them should become obscure and confus'd, and fabulous Stories should be imposed upon the World for Truth, in Matters of so great Importance. For it has been observ'd by divers learned Men, that the most ancient Histories, as well as the Philosophy and Theology of the Heathens, contain many things concerning the Creation of the World, the first Propagation of Mankind, the Flood, and other Particulars; which have so plain an Agreement with what we read in the Book of *Genesis*, that they are supposed to be taken out of it; but they are obscur'd and disguis'd under other Names and Characters, to conceal from whence they were originally taken, and to gain them the better Acceptance amongst those for whose Use the Books containing them were design'd by their Authors. And when the Remembrance of God's Dealings with past Ages began to fail, and the Ways of Humane Convey-

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ance were so uncertain, it was requisite that some infallible Account should be given of God's Dispensations, and his Communications of himself in the first Ages, which might be transmitted down to Posterity, unto the End of the World.

CHAP. II.

The Promulgation of the Scriptures.

THE End and Design of a Revelation from Heaven, must be for the Good of Mankind, and therefore it was necessary, that it should be known and promulg'd in the World; and that Revelation which had been known to most Nations, and farthest divulged, carries another Evidence of its Divine Authority. For, since it is necessary, there should be some Divine Revelation, it is likewise necessary, that it should be sufficient to the Ends for which it was design'd; and it was revealed, not to be conceal'd, or confined to a few Persons, but to rectify the Mistakes, and regulate the Manners of Men; and therefore that which has been most known, and farthest propagated, we have Reason to think to be a True Revelation. If every thing else concur to prove it true, the very Promulgation of it is a considerable Evidence in proof of its Divine Authority: Because it is not to be supposed, that God would either suffer his own Revelation to be so stifled and suppress'd, as to become of little or no Use and Benefit to the World, or that he would permit false Revelations to be more known and divulg'd; either of which would very ill consist with the Intention of Revealing his Will to Mankind.

It has been already proved, That it is not to be expected that God should reveal himself to every Man in

in particular, and it could not be requisite, that he should afford a constant and standing Revelation in all Nations of the World. For if Mankind be sufficiently provided for in the Necessaries of Salvation, this is all which in Reason can be expected from a Just and Good God to sinful and perverse Man. If Men be put in the ready Way of Salvation, and have sufficient Means allowed them to attain it; all beyond this is the mere arbitrary Effect of Infinite Goodness, and depends wholly upon the good Pleasure of God, being more than we could promise our selves from his Justice, or, by Reason, foresee from his Mercy it self. And his Wisdom so orders and disposes the Effects and Emanations of his Mercy, as to render them consistent with his Justice and Honour, as he is Governor of the World.

And if, in the first Ages, Revelations were frequent, and generally known amongst all Mankind, 'till by their own Fault and Neglect they were withholden from them; it was the great Mercy of God, afterwards, to continue to those Nations, who had despised and rejected him, an Opportunity of knowing his Will revealed to others: And this God was pleased to do, by appointing a chosen Seed, and selecting to himself a peculiar People, to bear his Name before the Nations; and, by the various Dispensations of his Providence, he so disposed of that People, that all Nations might be instructed in the Things revealed and delivered to them.

First then, I shall shew, That in the first Ages of the World, the revealed Will of God was known to all Mankind.

Secondly, That in succeeding Ages there have still been sufficient Means and frequent Opportunities for all Nations to come to the Knowledge of it.

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1. In the first Ages of the World, the Revealed Will of God was known to all Mankind. And here we must have Recourse to the History of the Bible; since it is acknowledged, by all learned Men to be so much the ancientest Book which can give us an Account of Religion, in the World. For unless we will reject all History, and believe nothing related of Ancient Times, we must take our Accounts from such Books as treat of them: And 'till by the Method proposed, I have proved the Bible to be of Divine Authority, I shall alledge it only as an Historical Relation of Things past; in which respect, it would be unreasonable to deny it that Credit which is allowed to other Books of that Nature. And this is all that is now desired, in order to the clearing of what I am at present upon; which is to shew, That nothing requisite to a true Revelation is wanting to the Scriptures; and therefore, that they have been sufficiently promulged and made known to the World.

In the Beginning of the World, God was pleased to create but one Man, and one Woman, and to people the Earth from them; which must exceedingly tend both to the Preservation of Order and Obedience amongst Men, and to the retaining of the Knowledge of God, and of his Ways and Dealings with the first Parents of Mankind. But if Multitudes had been created, and the Earth had been peopled at once, the natural Effect of this had been Ambition and Strife, Confusion and Ignorance: For as the Inhabitants of the World multiplied, so did all Sin and Wickedness encrease; though all descended from the same Parents, and these Parents lived to see many Generations of their Off-spring, and to instruct and admonish them; which, if any Thing could have done it, must have kept up a Sense of God and Religion amongst Men. *Adam* himself performed the Office of a Father, a Priest, and a King, to his Children; and the Office and Authority of these three descended upon the Heads

Heads of Families, in the several Generations and Successions of Kingdoms amongst his Posterity: For that the same Person was both King and Priest in the earlier Ages of the World, we learn from the best Antiquities of other Nations, and it was so likewise amongst the [d] *Hebrews*, 'till God appointed an Order and Succession of the Priesthood in one Tribe: and therefore *Esau* is styled a *Profane Person*, for selling his Birth-right, because the Priesthood went along with it, *Heb.* xii. 16.

By all the Accounts we have of the World before the Flood, we are assured, that God was pleased, at first, to afford frequent Communications of himself to Mankind; and even to the Wicked, as to *Cain*, whose Punishment it afterwards was, to be *hid from the Face* of the Lord, and driven out from *his presence*, Gen. iv. 14, 16. And when the Wickedness of Men had provoked God to drown the World, he revealed this to *Noah*, and respited the Execution of this Judgment an Hundred Years; and *Noah*, in the mean time both by his Preaching, and by preparing an Ark, warned them of it, and exhorted them to Repentance: by *preparing of an ark to the saving of his house, he condemned the world*, Heb. xi. 7. And he was *a preacher of righteousness to the old World*, 2 Pet. ii. 5. In our Translation we read, *the eighth Person, a Preacher of Righteousness.* [e] But it is rendered by some, and perhaps more exactly, *the eighth Preacher of Righteousness*, implying that there were seven before him. However he made it his Business, for above an Hundred Years together, to forewarn the wicked World of their approaching Ruin; which he did by all the ways

[d] ——*Omnesque primogenitos Noe, donec sacerdotio fungeretur Aaron, fuisse Pontifices (Hebræi tradunt.)* Hieronym. Quæstion. seu Tradit. Hebraic. in Genes.

[e] Ὀγδοον Νωε δικαιοσυνης κηρυκα ἐφυλαξε, octavum Justitiæ Præconem Noe. *Erasm. Vid.* Jud. ℣ 14.

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and Means that a Wise and Great Man could contrive, proper for that End.

Noah lived after the Flood, Three hundred and fifty Years, *Gen.* ix. 28. and it was between One and Two hundred Years before the Division of Tongues, and the Dispersion of the Sons of *Noah*. And when all the Inhabitants of the Earth were of one Language, and lived not far asunder, *Noah* himself living amongst them; the Judgment of God upon the wicked World, in overwhelming them with the Flood; his Mercies to *Noah* and his Family, in their Preservation, when all the rest of the Word perished; and the Commandments which God gave to *Noah* at his coming out of the Ark, with his Promises and Threatnings repectively to the Performance or Trangression of them, must be well known: and the Sin in building the Tower of *Babel*, for which the Universal Language was confounded, and the Race of Mankind dispersed, could proceed from nothing but the height of Presumption and Perverseness. After the Confusion of Languages, and the Dispersion of Mankind, they could not on the sudden remove to very distant and remote Places, by reason of the unpassable Woods, and Deserts, and Marshes, which, after so vast an Inundation, must be every where to be met with, to obstruct their Passage in those hot and fruitful Countries, when they had lain uninhabited for so many Years. This we may the better understand, from the slow Progress which was made in the Discoveries of the *West-Indies*. For the *Spaniards*, in those Places where they found neither Guide nor Path, did not enter the Country ten Miles[e] in ten Years. And in those Ages they could not but be ill provided, either by their own Skill, or by convenient Tools and Instruments, with fit means to clear the Country which they were to pass; and they were likewise unprovi-

[e] See Sir *W. Rawleigh*, l. 1. c. 8. § 3.

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ded of Vessels to transport any great Numbers of Men, with their Families, and Flocks and Herds of Cattle, which were for many Ages their only Riches, and absolutely necessary for their Sustenance: For Navigation had never had so slow an Improvement in the World, if it had so soon been in that Perfection as to enable them for such Transportations.

And as for these Reasons, the Dispersion of *Noah's* Posterity over the Earth must be gradual, and many Generations must pass, before the remoter Parts of it could be inhabited; so the several Plantations must be supposed to hold Correspondence with those to whom they were neareſt allied, and from whom they went out; they must be supposed to own some sort of Dependence upon them, and pay them such Acknowledgements as Colonies have ever done to their Mother-Cities. It is natural to suppose that they first spread themselves into the neighbouring Countries; and (as Sir *Walter Rawleigh* has observed) the first Plantations were generally by the Banks of Rivers, whereby they might hold Intelligence one with another; which they could not do by Land, that being overspread with Woods, and altogether unfit for travelling. And the great Affinity which is observable between the Eastern Languages, proves that there was a continual Correspondence and Commerce maintained between the several Nations, after the Dispersion.

All which, considering the great Age that Men lived to in those Times, must, without a very gross Neglect and Contempt of God, preserve a true Notion of Religion in the several Parts of the World: For *Noah* himself lived Three Hundred and Fifty Years after the Flood; his Sons were not soon dispersed; their Dispersion was gradual, and they held a Correspondence after their Separation, and lived long to educate and train up their Children in that Knowledge of God, which they had received and been in-

structed in themselves; and besides, they had little else to discourse upon, but such Things as would necessarily lead them to it: The History of their own Nation and Family is that which Men are naturally most fond of; and in these Ages the Particulars could be but few, and those very remarkable, and almost within the Memory of some yet living; and every *Occurrence* must bring to their Remembrance what they had heard, and had been taught concerning God, and his Dealings with them and their Forefathers.

Moreover, there was the special Hand of God, and a particular Over-ruling Providence, in the Dispersion and Division of Nations: For, *when the most High divided to the Nations their Inheritance, when he separated the sons of* Adam, *he set the bounds of the people, according to the number of the children of Israel*, Deut. xxxii. 8. He *determined the bounds of their habitation, that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him*, Acts xvii. 26, 27. This was the reason of the Division of the Nations, *according to the number of the children of Israel*, who are stiled, *a Peculiar Treasure, a Kingdom of Priests*, and *a holy Nation*, Exod. xix. 5, 6. There was a particular Regard had to the Number of the Chosen Seed, that they might bear a fit Proportion to the rest of Mankind, and might be as so much Leaven to the whole Mass, as a quickening and enlivening Principle to excite and maintain due Apprehensions of God, and his Worship and Service in the World: And this is the Reason given, why Polygamy was permitted them: That they who were the peculiar People of God, and were to teach his Commandments to the rest of the World, might sufficiently encrease and multiply. For though it appears by our Registers, [g] that here more Males are born than Females,

[g] *See* Graunt *on the* Bills of Mortality.

to a considerable Disproportion, and that therefore Polygamy amongst us would not tend to the Multiplication of Mankind, but rather to the contrary; yet in *Judæa* it might be otherwise; or the Captive Women, whom they were permitted to marry, might raise the Number of Females above that of the Males; or their perpetual Wars might lessen the Number of Males to a degree beneath the Females. However, this is the Reason alledg'd by learned Men, why Polygamy, which was not permitted from the Beginning, should be allowed the *Israelites*; for indeed it was of great Consequence, that they should multiply so as to have a due Proportion to the rest of the World; and for the same Reason, the surviving Brother was to raise up Seed to the Deceased. Barrenness was a Reproach; and to die Childless a Curse; and a numerous Off-spring, a Blessing, so often promised, that it is evident, that many Dispensations of the Divine Providence depended upon it.

And the better to revive and keep up a Sense of Religion amongst Men, those who were most eminent for Piety were employed to be God's Heralds and Embassadors to the rest of the World, as the whole People of *Israel* are appealed to as his *Witnesses*, Isai. xliii. 12. and xliv. 8. The *Jews* have a Tradition, [h] That *Abraham*, refusing to worship the Fire, the God of the *Chaldæans*, was thrown by them into it, and was deliver'd out of it by Miracle: And therefore they understand it, not that he went forth from *Ur of the Chaldees*, as it signifies a Place, but from the *Fire* of the *Chaldees*; *Ur* in the *Hebrew* Tongue signifying *Fire*. But we have no need of Recourse to such Traditions: This is certain, *Abraham* was sent, by God's Command, out of *Chaldæa* into *Canaan*; and there he had no fix'd or settled Habitation, but *journied*, *going*

[h] S. Hieron. Quæst. in Genes. S. August. Quæst. in Genes. v. qu. 25.

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on still towards the South, Gen. xii. 9. 'till a Famine happening in that Country, the Providence of God so disposed of Things, that he and *Lot* went into *Ægypt*. And when he was there, he was by a very remarkable Accident taken great notice of by *Pharaoh* himself. For *Pharaoh* admiring the Beauty of *Sarah*. *Abraham*'s Wife, takes her into his House; for which great Plagues were inflicted on him and his Houshold: And *Pharaoh* perceiving the reason of it, sends him away, with his Wife, and all that he had. By this it became notorious to *Pharaoh* and his Princes, that *Abraham* was under God's peculiar Care and Providence, and that therefore it concerned them to regard what he professed concerning Religion, and the Worship of God. *Abimelech* likewise, King of *Gerar*, sent and took *Sarah*: Upon which God appeared to him in a Dream, and declared to him that *Abraham* was a Prophet, and that he should *pray for him*; and this *Abimelech* told to *all his servants*, Gen. xx. 7, 8. And he calls upon God, by his Name *Jehovah*, ver. 4. which shews that he had knowledge of the True God.

After *Abraham* and Lot were returned into *Canaan* from *Ægypt*; upon some Disagreement between their Herds-men, they parted from each other, *Lot* going towards *Sodom*, and *Abraham* to the Plain of *Mamre* in *Hebron*. And it came to pass, that there was War between nine Kings of that Country, four being Confederate on the one side, and five on the other. But the King of *Sodom*, and his Confederates being defeated in Battle, *Lot*, who dwelt in *Sodom*, was, with all his Goods, carried away by the Enemy: Of which, when *Abraham* was inform'd, he armed his Servants, and with no more than Three-hundred and eighteen Men, gained a signal Victory, retook *Lot*, and brought him back, with all his Family and Goods. And at his Return he is met by the King of *Sodom*, and by *Melchizedek* King of *Salem*, who being *the Priest of*

the moſt high God, in a moſt ſolemn Manner bleſſed *Abraham*, who gives him the Tenth of all his Spoil: Which whole Action muſt needs render *Abraham* mightily renowned in all that Country. So much Mercy did God extend to the *Canaanites*, who, after they had filled up the Meaſure of their Iniquities, were to be rooted out, to make way for the *Iſraelites* to poſſeſs their Land; that *Abraham*, and *Lot*, and *Melchizedek*, and their Families, were appointed as Monitors and Inſtructors to them in the Ways of Righteouſneſs and Piety: And when all this was ineffectual to their Amendment, *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* were deſtroyed by a moſt miraculous and viſible Judgment, with Fire from Heaven, after God had declared, at *Abraham*'s Interceſſion, that if there had been but Ten Righteous Perſons in thoſe Cities, he would have ſaved the reſt for their Sakes. *Lot*, with his Family only, eſcaped this dreadful Judgment; and his Wife looking back, out of Fondneſs for the Place ſhe had left, was turned into a Pillar of Salt; which were ſo ſtrange and ſo remarkable Judgments, that it muſt be a prodigious Obſtinacy in Sin, not to be reclaimed and brought to an Acknowledgment of God's Power and Authority by them.

The *Moabites* and the *Ammonites* were deſcended from *Lot*, and therefore it muſt be through their great Sin and Negligence, if they did not retain a true Notion of Religion. They had Poſſeſſion given them of the Land they dwelt in, by God himſelf, by whom the former Inhabitants, a wicked and formidable Race of Giants, were deſtroyed before them, as the *Canaanites* afterwards were before the *Children of Iſrael*, Deut. ii. 9, 19. Our Saviour was deſcended from *Ruth* the *Moabiteſs*. And the *Ammonites* are diſtinguiſhed from the Heathen, *Ezek.* xxv. 7.

But as *Abraham* has the peculiar Character given him of, *the Friend of God*, and *the Father of the Faithful*;

ful; so his Power and Influence was very great. He is said, [i] both by *Justin*, and *Nicolaus Damascenus*, to have been King of *Damascus*; and the latter farther adds, that in his own Time the Name of *Abraham* was famous in that City, and that a Village was nominated from him, being called *Abraham*'s *House*, or *Palace*. He was *a mighty Prince among the children of Heth*, and was respected as such by them, *Gen.* xxiii. 6, 10. The [k] Oak of *Mamre* was had in great Devotion by the Heathens. The [l] Religion of the ancient *Persians*, is stiled in the East, the Religion of *Abraham*; and the Book which contains it, the Book of *Abraham*; and the *Indian Brahman*, or *Brahaman*, are supposed to derive their Name from him. [m] *Areus* King of the *Lacedæmonians*, in his Letter to *Onias* the High-Priest, says, that *it was found in Writing*, that *the* Lacedæmonians *and the* Jews *were Brethren*, and *that they were of the Stock of* Abraham. The *Saracens*, and other *Arabians*, were descended from *Abraham*; and Circumcision, which was practised by so many Nations, being a Seal of the Covenant, and a Rite of Initiation, must be supposed to have some Notion of the Covenant it self communicated together with it. For there is no Probability that Circumcision, used as a Religious and Mysterious Rite, could have any other Original among Heathen Nations, than from *Abraham*; and the only Reason brought to prove that it had another Beginning amongst them, is, because it was used upon a Natural Cause, and varied in the Time of Administration: But the Time might happen to be changed by some unknown Accident; and it was always, I think, used upon a Religious Account at first, whatever Natural or Moral Causes might be likewise assigned: And such the *Jews* themselves were

[i] Justin. l. 36. c. 2. Nic. Damas. apud Joseph. Antiq. l. 1. c. 8.
[k] Hieron. de Loc. Hebr. [l] Hyde's Hist. Relig. vet. Pers. c. 2.
[m] 1 Mac. xii. 20, 21. Joseph. Antiq. l. 12. 5.

wont [n] to assign, as well as that of their Religion; and it is possible, that in some Places, the Religious Cause of its Observation might be forgot, and the Natural or Moral only retain'd.

Besides the other Sons of *Abraham*, which were many, *Isaac* and *Ishmael* must have been very instrumental in propagating the True Religion; and we can suppose none educated under *Abraham*, or belonging to him, but they must have been well qualified for that purpose, and must more or less retain the Impressions they had received from him; this being the Character which God himself gives of *Abraham*, *I know him, that he will command his Children and his Household after him, and they shall keep the Way of the Lord*, Gen. xviii. 19. The *Jews* made particular mention of the Care which both *Abraham* and *Sarah* took in instructing Proselytes; and [o] *Maimonides* writes, that *Abraham* left a Book behind him upon that Subject. *Ishmael* was the Son of an *Ægyptian* Mother, *Gen.* xvi. 1. and his Wife was an *Ægyptian*: His Sons were Twelve in Number, and of great Power, being styled *Princes*, and their Dominions were of a large Extent, *Gen.* xxv. 16, 18. *Isaac* was to marry none of the Daughters of *Canaan*, but one of his own Kindred; and a Messenger is sent into *Mesopotamia*, to bring *Rebekah* from thence, God directing and prospering him in his Journey: Which Alliance and Affinity renew'd with the *Chaldæans*, could not fail of a good Effect, for the Preservation and Advancement of Religion in those Countries. But a Famine being again in the Land, *Isaac* removes to *Abimelech* King of the *Philistines*, unto *Gerar*, and by him the Beauty of *Rebekah* was admired, as *Sarah*'s had been by *Pharaoh* in *Ægypt*, and here by *Abimelech*: But tho' he

[n] Philo de Circumcis. Maimon. More Nevoch. Par. 3. c. 49. Ludolf. Hist. Æthiop. lib. 3. cap 1 n. 3.

[o] De Idololat. c. 1. § 9.

had

had said she was his *Sister*, (as *Abraham* said likewise of *Sarah*) meaning in that Latitude of the Word usual in those Countries, whereby Women were called the *Sisters* of all to whom they were nearly related; yet the Providence of God so order'd it, that no Attempts should be made to her Dishonour, but the King of the *Philistines* had a great Regard and Reverence for *Isaac* and his Wife: the Blessing of God was visible in all his Undertakings; he became much mightier than the *Philistines*, and therefore they envy'd him; which occasioned his Remove to *Beersheba*, whither *Abimelech*, with his Friends and Attendance, came to enter into a strict League and Covenant with him, professing that they *saw certainly that the Lord* (that is, *Jehovah* the True God) *was with him*, and declaring him to be *the blessed of the Lord*, Gen. xxvi. 11, 14, 16, 26. And for the same reason, the *Philistines* had formerly desired to make a Covenant with *Abraham*, saying, *God is with thee in all that thou dost*, &c. *Gen.* xxi. 22.

Esau, at the Age of Forty Years, marry'd two Wives of the Daughters of the *Hittites*, Gen. xxvi. 34. which, tho' it griev'd *Isaac* and *Rebekah*, who would have had him marry with their own Kindred, yet must give the *Hittites* farther Opportunities of acquainting themselves with the Religion and Worship of the *Hebrews*; but he marries besides a Daughter of *Ishmael*, *Abraham*'s Son, *Gen.* xxviii. 9. which confirmed and strengthen'd the Alliance between the true Believers. *Esau* was the Father of the *Edomites*, and of a numerous Off-spring of Dukes and Kings, *Gen.* xxxvi. 9, 31. And according to the Custom and Design of the Book of *Genesis*, the Generations descended from *Esau* had not been so particularly set down, unless they had retained the Knowledge and Worship of the True God. This was *Moses*'s Message to the King of *Edom*: *Thus saith thy Brother* Israel, *Thou knowest all the Travel that hath befallen us, how*

our Fathers went down into Ægypt, and we have dwelt in Ægypt a long time, and the Ægyptians vexed us and our Fathers, and when we cried unto the Lord, he heard our Voice, Numb. xx. 14. The *Edomites*, as well as the *Moabites* and *Ammonites*, were put into Poſſeſſion of their Country, by the ſame Divine Power by which the *Iſraelites* became poſſeſſed of the Land of *Canaan*, and the Children of *Iſrael* were not to meddle with them, *Deut.* ii. 5.

Jacob is ſent to *Padan-Aram*, to take to Wife one of the Daughters of *Laban*, and with him he abode twenty Years, *Gen.* xxxi. 38. And all which he took in hand proſpered ſo, that there was the viſible Power and Bleſſing of God in it, as *Laban* confeſſed, *Gen.* xxx. 27. *Iſaac* was not to leave the Land of *Canaan*, but was forbid to remove into *Ægypt*, when there was a Famine in the Land, *Gen.* xxvi. 2. And he was not upon any Account to return into *Chaldæa*, or to go out of *Canaan*, Gen. xxiv. 6, 8. But *Jacob* went out of it, when there were enough of *Abraham*'s Houſe beſides to keep up a Senſe of the true Religion among the *Canaanites*.

Afterwards God manifeſted himſelf to the *Ægyptians*, by a various and wonderful *Providence*; for *the ſojourning of the children of Iſrael, who dwelt in Ægypt was four hundred and thirty Years*, (Exod. xii. 40.) 'till at laſt, by Signs and Wonders, and dreadful Judgments: By Judgments upon their *Firſt-born* and upon *their Gods*, Numb. xxxiii. 4. they were brought out from thence; and *the Nations heard the fame* of it, and *all the Earth was filled with the glory of the Lord*, Numb. xiv. 15, 21.

Thus *Chaldæa* and *Ægypt*, the moſt famous and flouriſhing Countries, in thoſe Ages of the World, had the true Religion brought home to them by the Patriarchs, who were ſent from Place to Place to ſojourn, to be a Pattern and Example to the reſt of Mankind. And Men who travelled ſo far, and converſed

versed with so many Nations, and were so zealous for God's Honour, and had such frequent Revelations, and the immediate Direction of God himself, in most of the Actions of their Lives, and who were so Great and Powerful, and so Numerous, must needs mightily propagate Religion where-ever they came, and leave the Idolaters without Excuse; and it cannot be doubted but that they had great Success in all Places; for even out of *Ægypt*, where they endured the greatest Hardships, and were in such Contempt and Hatred, yet *a mixed multitude went up also with them*, besides the native *Israelites*, Exod. xii. 38 [p].

And as *Chaldæa* and *Ægypt* were famous for Learning and Commerce, and proper Places, by their Situation, from whence the Notions of Religion might be propagated both towards the East and the West, to other Parts of the World; so I must again observe, that God's Mercy was particularly manifested towards the *Canaanites* before their Destruction: The Example of *Melchizedek*, who reigned among them, and the sojourning of *Abraham*, and *Lot*, and *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, not to mention *Ishmael* and *Esau*, with their numerous Families, afforded them continual Invitations, and Admonitions for their Instruction and Amendment; especially the Judgment upon *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, and the miraculous Deliverance of *Lot*, was enough to strike an Awe and Terrour into the most Obdurate. But when they would not make any due Use of these Mercies, when they persisted still in their Impieties, and proceeded in them till they had filled up the Measure of their Iniquities; God made them an Example to others, after they would take no Warning themselves; yet still *executing his judgments upon them by little and little, he gave them place of repentance, not being ignorant that they*

[p] Et etiam Peregrini multi, ex quibus ducentæ quadraginta Myriades ascenderunt cum illis, *Targ. Jonath. in Exod.* xii. 38.

were

were a naughty generation, and that their malice was bred in them, and that their Cogitation would never be changed, Wisd. xii. 10.

How much the true Religion prevail'd by these Dispensations of Providence, among other Nations besides the *Hebrews*, we have an *illustrious* Instance in *Job* and his Friends, who were Princes in their several Dominions. They had Knowledge of the Fall of the Angels, *Job* iv. 18. and of the Original Corruption of Man, which is express'd with this Emphasis, that he cannot be *clean*, or *righteous*. who *is born of a woman*; because by *Eve*'s Transgression, Sin came into the World, *Job* xiv. 1. xv. 14. and xxv. 4. *Adam* is mentioned *chap.* xxxi. 33. The Resurrection is describ'd *chap.* xiv. 12. And it appears that Revelations were vouchsafed to these Nations, *chap.* xxxiii. 15. *Job* is mention'd as a Prophet, *Jam.* v. 10, 11. It appears, that the Fundamentals of Religion were known Doctrines amongst them, and are therefore mention'd both by *Job* himself, and by his Friends, in as plain Terms as may be, and as fully as can be expected in a Book which is Poetical, the Nature whereof requires that known things should be alluded to, but not so particularly related as in History. And there is no doubt but the Propagation of Religion, in other Parts of the World, would be as evident, if the Scriptures had not occasionally only, and in the course of other things, but of set purpose treated of this Matter; as we may gather from the Footsteps to be found in Heathen Authors, of what the Scriptures deliver to us, and from the several Allusions and Representations in the Rites and Ceremonies of their Religions, expressing, tho' obscurely and confusedly, the chief Points of the Scripture-story, as has been shewn by divers learned Men.

It must be remember'd, that the Patriarchs built Altars wherever they came, to which they, with their numerous Followers resorted to offer Sacrifice and

and *call upon the Name of the Lord*, Gen. viii. 10. xii. 7, 8. xiii. 4, 18. xxvi. 25. xxxiii. 20. xxxv. 7. which publick and solemn Worship rendred their Piety very observable and exemplary. And it may with great Probability be concluded, that not only the Priest, but the Place and Time for Divine Worship were appropriated and stated from the beginning, inasmuch as *Cain* and *Abel* brought their Offerings, at the same time, *at the end of days* to the same Place, to *Adam*, to be presented by him to the Lord in Sacrifice. For so some of the ancient Jewish Expositors explain this Passage concerning *Cain* and *Abel*.

2. In succeeding Ages, after the giving the Law, when the *Jews*, by their Laws concerning Religion and Government, may seem to have been wholly separated from the rest of the World, and the Divine Revelations confin'd to one Nation, there still were sufficient Means and frequent Opportunities for all Nations to come to the Knowledge of the Truth. And here I shall shew, 1. That the Law of *Moses* did particularly provide for the Instruction of other Nations in the Reveal'd Religion, and that the Scriptures give frequent Commandment and Encouragement concerning it. 2. That the Providence of God did so order and dispose of the *Jews* in their Affairs, as to offer other Nations frequent Opportunities of becoming instructed in the true Religion, and that Multitudes of Proselytes were made of all Nations.

1. The Law of *Moses* did particularly provide for the Instruction of other Nations in the Reveal'd Religion, and the Scriptures give frequent Commandment and Encouragement concerning it. The *Strangers* or *Proselytes*, amongst the *Jews*, were of two sorts; for either they were such as became Circumcised, and obliged themselves to the Observation of the whole Law of *Moses*, who were styled *Proselytes of Righteousness*, or of the Covenant; or they were such

such as believed in the True God, and professed only to observe the Precepts given to *Noah*, which comprised the Substance of the Ten Commandments; and these were called *Proselytes of the Gates*, because they were permitted to live amongst them, within their Gates; these are the *Strangers in their Gates*, mentioned *Deut.* xiv. 21. who might eat of such Things as the *Israelites* themselves were forbidden to eat of.

If any would be Circumcised, and undertake the Observation of the whole Law, they had full Liberty, and the greatest Encouragement to do it. At the first Institution of Circumcision, not only *Abraham* and his Seed, but his whole Family, and all that were bought *with money of any Stranger*, were to be circumcised, *Gen.* xvii. 12, 27. And at the Institution of the Passover, the Stranger is commanded to observe it, as well as the Natural *Israelite*, Exod. xii. 19. God made no Distinction in the Institution of both these Sacraments, between the *Jews*, and those other Nations that dwelt amongst them, and were willing to conform themselves to the Observation of the Law; but first to *Abraham*, when he appointed Circumcision, and then to *Moses*, when the Passover was instituted, particular Order is given concerning *Strangers* or *Proselytes*, who would betake themselves to them, *one law shall be to him that is home-born, and to the stranger that sojourneth among you*, Exod. xii. 49. Deut. xxix. 11. And as the receiving the Seal of Circumcision was an Admission into Covenant with God, and implied an Obligation to observe the whole Law, and a Right to the Privileges of it, which was confirmed and renewed by their partaking of the Passover; so it is to be observed, not only that God did in general admit Strangers and Aliens to the same Worship with the *Jews*, but that throughout their whole Law frequent Mention is made of them, and Care taken for their Reception and Behaviour: For though what is but once said in Scripture, is a sufficient Proof of the Will and Pleasure

Pleasure of God in any Matter; yet when a Thing is often mentioned, and every where inculcated, it is an Evidence to us, that God would have the more Notice taken of it, and has laid the strictest Obligation upon all to observe it. But we find express Mention made of the *Stranger*, at the Appointment of the Yearly Feast of Atonement, *Lev.* xvi. 29. The *Stranger* was obliged to bring his Sacrifice to the Door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation; and in the Prohibitions of eating Blood, he is particularly forbidden it, *chap.* xvii. 8, 9, 12, 15. All the Laws relating to Marriage, and concerning unlawful Lust, are equally enjoined the *Stranger* and the *Israelite*, chap. xviii. 26. He was to be stoned, if he gave any of his Seed unto *Moloch*, chap. xx. 2. And he was obliged to all the same Laws concerning Sacrifices, *chap.* xxii. 18. And was to be stoned for Blasphemy; and for Murther, Hurt, or Damage, the Law made no Difference between *Strangers*, and Native *Israelites*. *Ye shall have one manner of law, as well for the Stranger, as for one of your own country; for I am the Lord your God*, chap. xxiv. 16, 22. The Sabbath was appointed to the *Stranger* within their Gates, *Exod.* xx. 10. and xxiii. 12. *Lev.* xxv. 6. *Deut.* v. 14. And the Feasts of Pentecost, of Tabernacles, and of Atonement, as well as the Passover, were enjoined him, *Deut.* xvi. 11, 14. *Lev.* xvi. 29. The Feast of Tabernacles is restrained to the *Israelites born*, Lev. xxiii. 42. only as to their *dwelling in booths seven days*. The *Stranger* was to hear the Law read in the Solemnity of the Year of Release, *chap.* xxxi. 12. And the Covenant is expressly made with the *Stranger*, chap. xxix. 12. *Josh.* viii. 33, 35.

And as the *Strangers* or *Proselytes* were thus joined, in the very Design and Institution of the Law, with the Native *Israelites* themselves, as to all the Acts and Privileges of Religious Worship, when once they had received Circumcision, though they were not obliged to

to be circumcised, but were left to their Liberty, under no Obligation, but to worship the True God, and observe the Precepts of *Noah*; so God had a particular regard to them in their civil Statutes and Ordinances, to free them from Oppression, and every thing that might give Strangers any Discouragement from living amongst the *Israelites*, and becoming Partakers of their Religion with them: *Thou shalt neither vex a stranger, nor oppress him; for ye were strangers in the land of* Ægypt, Exod. xxii. 21. *Also thou shalt not oppress a stranger; for ye know the heart of a stranger, seeing ye were strangers in the land of* Ægypt, chap. xxiii. 9. It seems, one Reason of their being so long detained in *Ægypt*, was to teach them Humanity and Compassion to Strangers: *Thou shalt not oppress an hired servant that is poor and needy, whether he be of thy brethren, or of thy strangers that are in thy land within thy gates*, Deut. xxiv. 41. And care is taken of the Stranger, that he be not brought into want, or suffered to perish in his Distress; for the Gleanings of the Harvest and of the Vintage were his portion: *Thou shalt leave them for the poor and the stranger: I am the Lord*, Lev. xix. 10. and xxiii. 22. All manner of Kindness and Affection is in most express and ample Terms commanded towards all Strangers: *And if a stranger sojourn with thee in your land, ye shall not vex him: But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born amongst you, and thou shalt love him as thy self; for ye were strangers in the land of* Ægypt, *I am the Lord your God*, Lev. xix. 33, 34. And *Moses*, repeating the peculiar Favours which God had bestowed upon the *Children of Israel*, put them in mind, that *God loveth the stranger, in giving him food and raiment. Love ye therefore the stranger; for ye were strangers in the land of* Ægypt, Deut. x. 18, 19. The *Widow*, the *Stranger*, and the *Fatherless*, are usually mention'd together in Scripture, as being jointly the Care of God's more peculiar Providence, and he recommends them to

to the Charity of his People. And to oppress the Stranger is reckon'd the highest Aggravation of Wickedness: *They slay the widow and the stranger, and murther the fatherless; yet they say, The Lord shall not see, neither shall the God of* Jacob *regard it*, Psal. xciv. 6, 7. *The People of the land have used oppression, and exercised robbery, and have vexed the poor and needy; yea, they have oppressed the stranger wrongfully*, Ezek. xxii. 29. And to the same purpose, *Psal.* cxlvi. 9. *Jer.* vii. 6. and xxii. 3. *Zech.* vii. 10. *Mal.* iii. 5. Particular Provision was made in the Law, for the Dwellings of Proselytes, *Lev.* xxv. 29. *And if a man sell a dwelling-house in a walled City, then he may redeem it within a whole year, after it is sold, within a full year may he redeem it. And, if it be not redeemed within the space of a full year, then the house that is in the walled city shall be established for ever to him that bought it, throughout his generations, it shall not go out in the jubilee.* For which Law, *Philo Judæus* assigns this Reason, That the *Proselytes* might not be destitute of Houses: For the Cities (says he) when the Land was divided by Lot, were not divided among the Tribes, but were built afterwards; the first Habitations being in Villages: And therefore, by this Law, Houses in Cities were secured to the Proselytes dwelling in the Land. What he says of the Cities, must be understood only of the greatest part of them; for it is certain, that the *Israelites* entered upon the Possession of Cities and Houses already built, *Deut.* vi. 10. *Josh.* xxiv. 13.

Though their Bond-men and Bond-women were not to be of the Native *Israelites*, but of the *Heathen*, that were round about them, and of the *Strangers* that dwelt amongst them, *Lev.* xxv. 44. yet an *Israelite* might sell himself to a *Stranger*, and become his Servant: But he might be redeemed again, either by himself, or by his near Kinsman, and was to be released at the Year of Jubilee, ℣ 47. The Cities of Refuge were

were provided for the Stranger and the Sojourner, *Numb.* xxxv. 15. *Josh.* xx. 9. The Judges were particularly commanded to execute righteous and impartial Judgment to the Stranger, *Deut.* i. 16. A Caution is given, that neither the *Edomites* nor the *Ægyptians* were to be *abhorred* by them, but their Children were to be received into the Congregation of the Lord, in the Third Generation; that is, after an *Edomite* or *Ægyptian* had lived amongst them as a *Proselyte of the Gates*, their Children of the Third Generation might be capable of Circumcision, and be admitted to the Observation of the whole Law, *chap.* xxiii. 7. *Ruth* was a *Moabitess:* And though the *Ammonite* and *Moabite* were *for ever*, that is, by a perpetual Decree, excluded, even to the Tenth Generation, from the Congregation of the Lord, by reason of their Inhumanity to the *Israelites*, at their coming out of *Ægypt*, ℣ 3. yet neither were they of the preceding Generations debarred from becoming *Proselytes of the Gates*, and undertaking the Observation of the Precepts of *Noah.*

A Promise is made, that the Strangers shall rejoice in the good Things of the Land, *chap.* xxvi. 11. And the *Israelites* are threatened, that upon their Disobedience, the Stranger should be more prosperous than they, *chap.* xxviii. 43, 44. King *Solomon*, at the Dedication of the Temple, makes such particular Mention of the *Stranger*, in his Prayer, as shews both the Design of building it, and of all the Jewish Worship, to be such as that other Nations might share in it, and withal, he foretels what the Event should be: *Moreover, concerning a stranger that is not of thy people Israel, but cometh out of a far country, for thy name's sake; (for they shall hear of thy great name, and of thy strong hand, and of thy stretched-out arm) when he shall come and pray towards this house: Hear thou in heaven thy dwelling-place, and do according to all that the stranger calleth to thee for: that all people of the earth may know thy*

thy name, to fear thee, as do thy people Israel, and that they may know that this house which I have built is called by thy name, 1 Kings viii. 41, 42, 43. 2. Chron. vi. 33. This was *the house of Prayer for all people*, Isa. lvi. 7. Mar. xi. 17. And the Prophets, in their Prophecies concerning the Return of the *Jews* out of their Captivity in *Babylon*, and in their Predictions of the *Messias*, did not omit to insert peculiar Expressions of God's Love and Favour to Strangers and Proselytes, to shew that the Promises did extend to them, as well as to the Native *Jews* themselves, *Isa.* lvi. 3. *Ezek.* xlvii. 22, 23.

From all which, it is evident, that *Strangers* were equally capable of the Privileges and Advantages in the Jewish Worship, as the *Jews* themselves were; and that they were debarred of very little in their Civil Rights; and all Encouragement imaginable was given to *Strangers* to come and dwell amongst the *Jews*. The Law joins them together with the Natural *Israelite*, both in the Curses it denounces, and in the Blessings it promises; it severely threatens all that should oppress or defraud them; it commands the same Charity towards them, as towards the *Fatherless* and *Widow*, the greatest Objects of Human Compassion, and of the merciful Care and Providence of God: And the Prophets, with the utmost Severity, rebuke the *Jews*, for any Oppression or Abuse of them. The *Proselytes* were not excluded from their Sacrifices, their Prayers and Sacraments; and if they refused to take upon them the Observation of the whole Law; yet they had free Leave and great Encouragement to live amongst them, believing only in the True God, and obeying those Precepts which were given to all the Race of Mankind after the Flood. They might share in all the Rites of their Religious Worship, and were invited to do it; but if they would not submit to this, yet they were not therefore rejected, but might partake of their Civil Privileges, and live under the

Protection of their Government: And it is observable, that where the same Laws are repeated in several Places of Scripture, the *Stranger* is no where omitted; but what relates to him, is constantly repeated with the rest, as a necessary and essential Part of the Law. So that never any Government had so particular regard for Strangers, or was so peculiarly contrived for their Encouragement to live under it. Other Governments, as those of *Sparta* and *China*, have been so jealous of Foreigners, that, by their Original Constitution, they have forbid any Dealings with them, and would not suffer them to abide in their Cities. And the *Romans* had some Laws to the same effect; which [q] *Tully* indeed says was an *inhuman* thing, and it was the Cause of the *Bellum Sociale*, or the War raised against the *Romans* by the several States of *Italy*. The Freedom and Privilege of a Citizen of *Rome*, was purchased at a great Price, *Acts* xxii. 28. Of this [r] *Dio*, as well as St. *Luke*, informs us, speaking of the Times of *Claudius*; and in their Leagues with [s] divers Nations, the *Romans* inserted this express Condition, That *none* of them should be made Free of the City. And it appears from [t] *Plutarch*, that the Freedom of the City of *Rome* was not obtained in *Cicero*'s Time, but by great Favour, and with much Difficulty. [u] Foreigners were sometimes expelled. And [v] *Augustus* left it in charge to *Tiberius* and the Senate, Not to be too easy in granting the Freedom of the City. [w] *Pliny*, as a Reward to his Physician *Harpocras*, by whom he had been cured of a dangerous Illness, besought *Trajan* to grant him the Freedom of *Rome*; To which the Emperor consented. But *Harpocras*, being an *Ægyptian*, it was necessary, that he should be first Free of *Alexandria:* which was

[q] Tull. Offic. l. 3. [r] Dio. l. 60. [s] Tull. pro. Balbo. [t] Plut. in Cat. Min. & in Cic. [u] Sueton. in August. c. 42. Dio l. 37. [v] Dio. l. 56. [w] Epist. lib. 10. Ep. 6, 7.

also

also granted, but with this Declaration, That the Emperor had resolved, according to the Custom of former Princes, but seldom to bestow the Freedom of that City. At last, by a Constitution of [x] *Caracalla*, Freedom was granted to all within the *Roman* Empire, The *Greeks* were backward, particularly the [y] *Athenians*, in granting the Freedom of their City, [z] Marriages with Strangers were forbidden by the *Athenians*; and they had a Tax call'd Μέτοικιον, to be paid yearly by all Foreigners, both Men and Women; and they were so severe in exacting it, that those who [a] were unable to pay it, were sold or imprison'd. The [b] *Thebans*, as well as the *Athenians*, rarely granted to Strangers the Privileges of Citizens, but sometimes expell'd all Foreigners. The *Corinthians* thought it a proper Complement to make to *Alexander the Great*, after he had conquer'd the *East*, to present him with the Freedom of their City; and that he might be sensible of the high Respect shewn him in it, [c] they acquainted him, that none but himself and *Hercules* had ever been made Free of *Corinth*. *Plutarch* relates this Complement to have been made *Alexander* by the People of *Megara*. The [d] *Albani* made none Free of their City, but the *Greeks* and *Latins*: And it seems to have been the general Custom and Practice of Cities, to be very cautious and sparing in admitting Strangers to incorporate with them. But the *Jewish* Government, on the contrary, was so adapted and contrived for the Reception of Foreign Nations, that if they would but comply with their Laws, they made little or no Distinction between the Natives and Strangers; and the owning the True God, and professing to obey and serve him, entitled them not only to all

[x] H. Vales. Not. in Excerpt. ex Dion. Ez. Spanh. Orb. Rom. Exerc. 2. c. 4. [y] Demosth. adv. Aristocr. [z] Adv. Neær.
[a] Adv. Aristogit. Diog. Laert. in Xenocr. cum Obs. Menag.
[b] Dion. Halic. l. 2. [c] Sen. de Benef. l. 1. c. 13.
[d] Dion. Halic. l. 3.

the Rights of Humanity and Kindness, but to a more peculiar Care and Providence of God himself.

If the *Jews* did not always shew so much Humanity to Strangers as their Law required, this is to be ascribed wholly to their own Fault; and 'tis not the only Law which they were too prone to disobey. [e] *Maimonides* and some other Rabbins have affirmed, that *Proselytes of the Gates* were permitted to live in the Land at no other Time but in the Year of *Jubilee*; and that *Proselytes of Righteousness* only were to be received, as perpetual Inhabitants. But this is contrary to the Tenour of the Law, and particularly to *Deut.* xiv. 21. where Proselytes, or the Strangers dwelling within the Gates, are supposed to be constant Inhabitants, and distinguished both from Proselytes who had obliged themselves to the Observation of the Ceremonial Law, and from Aliens. Indeed, when the *Jews* became subject to the *Romans*, and by that Means, had no Power to constrain the *Proselytes of the Gates* to observe what they had [f] undertaken, it was determined, that they should hold no Conversation with them; yet, in the corruptest State of the *Jewish* Church, the *Gentiles* had a Court to worship in at the Temple: And the *Jews* always taught, That it was their Duty to relieve the *Heathen* with their Alms [g], and that it was lawful to converse with the *Gentiles*, if they did not eat with them, nor go into their Houses. And this was the Charge brought against St. *Peter*, *Thou wentest in to Men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them*, Acts xi. 3. But what Effect this abundant Provision of the Law, for the Conversion of other Nations, had, falls under the next Head. It is more proper to consider, in this Place, an Objection which comes in our Way; That the *Israelites* were to make no Marriages or Covenants with the

[e] Maim. de Idolol. c. 10. § 7. [f] Vid. Hammond. ad Matt. xxii. 15. & Selden. de Jure Nat. & Gent. l. 2. c. 5.

[g] *Dr.* Lightfoot *on* Acts x. 28. *and* Hebrew *and* Talmud. Exercitat. *on* Matt. vi. 2.

Seven

Seven Nations of the Land of *Canaan*, nor to shew them any Mercy, but utterly to destroy them, or drive them out, *Exod.* xxiii. 31. *Deut.* vii. 2.

To which I answer, That this was a peculiar and excepted Case, and therefore supposes that they were not thus to deal with any others, except the Nations there expressly named; but they might enter into Marriages and Covenants with all other Nations. And besides what has been already observed, of the great Mercy which God vouchsafed to these Nations, in sending the Patriarchs to sojourn amongst them; and that wonderful Judgement upon *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, to bring them to Repentance, and prevent that Destruction which was at last brought upon them: After so long and great Provocations, these Nations were not unavoidably to be extirpated; but the *Israelites* were, in the first Place to proffer Peace to them; and if they refused to accept of Peace, then they were to proceed against them in the utmost Extremity; which appears from *Deut.* xx. 10, *&c.* For after a general Command to offer Terms of Peace to the Cities which they should go to fight against; and if they refused it, to *smite every male thereof with the edge of the sword*, ℣ 13. it is added, ℣ 15. *Thus shalt thou do to all the cities that are very far from thee, which are not of the cities of these nations. But of the cities of these people, which the Lord thy God doth give thee for an inheritance, thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth*; *but thou shalt utterly destroy them*, &c. where it is evident, that what concerns their making Proposals of Peace, was to be understood in general of all Nations with whom they should at any Time have War. But then in their dealings with them upon a Victory, after their Refusal of the Peace offered, they were to distinguish between the *Canaanites* and other Nations: For the [h] *Ca-*

[h] *Quod si pacem abnuerent in Bellis quidem voluntariis, quæ Israelitæ suscipiebant adversus reliquas Nationes, omnes gladio perimebantur,*

naanites were to be *utterly destroyed*, if they should reject Terms of Peace; but all, except the *Males*, were to be spared of other Nations, though they were overcome, after they had refused to make Peace with them: And the Terms of Peace to be proposed, were, That they should become Tributaries, and Proselytes, so far as to own and Worship the True God, and then the Reason for their Extirpation ceased; which was, That these Idolatrous Nations might not teach the *Children of* Israel *to do after all their abominations, which they had done unto their Gods*, Deut. xx. 18.

When the Men of *Israel* tell the *Gibeonites*, *Peradventure ye dwell among us, and how shall we make a league with you?* Josh. ix. 7. This is to be understood of a League with them upon equal Terms, not of a Peace, whereby they might become Tributaries, *Deut.* xx. 11. And therefore the *Gibeonites* immediately answer'd and said to *Joshua*, *We are thy Servants*, Josh. ix. 8. that is, Do with us as you please, at least grant us our Lives, though not upon any other Terms of a League, yet on Conditions of Servitude: and we find the Peace and the League distinguished, *Josh.* ix. 15. But this fraudulent Way of getting into a League with the *Israelites*, if it had not been for the Oath, which secured their Livss to them, had forfeited that Right which otherwise they might have had to their Lives, by a Peace fairly obtained; and they lost all other Advantages of the League, but only the securing their Lives. In the[1] *Jerusalem Gemara* it is written, that *Joshua* made Three Proposals to the *Canaanites*, viz. That they might either leave the Country, or be admitted into a League upon Conditions of Peace, or prepare themselves for Battle; and that the *Girgashites* being terrify'd by the mighty Works, which God had

mebantur exceptis mulieribus & parvulis: at in iis quæ gerebantur cum septem Nationibus, etiam hi occidebantur. Menass. Ben. Isr. Cinciliat. in Deut. Qu. 8.

[1] Selden, de Jure Natur. & Gen. l. 6. c. 13.

wrought

wrought for the Children of *Israel*, fled into *Africk*, the *Gibeonites* making a League with them, staid in the Land, and the thirty one Kings (*Josh.* xii. 24.) who would neither fly, nor accept of Terms of Peace, were slain in Battel. [k]*Maimonnides* says, that Embassadors had been sent to the *Gibeonites*, as well as to the rest of those Nations, and that they had rejected the Propositals of Peace, and upon that Account should have been destroy'd; but hearing afterwards of the wonderful Success of the Arms of the *Israelites*, and of that Law by which they were devoted to Destruction, because they had not accepted of a Peace upon the Terms propos'd; they contrived to save themselves by pretending, that they liv'd at a great distance, and were not of the Number of those Nations, who had had Tenders of Peace made to them. But that the *Canaanites*, if they had submitted, and own'd the God of *Israel*, were not to have been destroy'd, but to have been received to Mercy, is evident from *Josh.* xi. 19, 20. *There was not a city that made peace with the children of* Israel, *save the* Hivites *the inhabitants of* Gibeon; *all other they took in battel: For it was of the Lord to harden their hearts, that they should come against* Israel *in battel, that he might destroy them utterly, and that they might have no favour, but that he might destroy them, as the Lord commanded* Moses. Which necessarily supposes, that if God, in his just Judgment upon them, for their heinous Provocations, had not harden'd their Hearts, but they had submitted themselves, and sought Peace of the *Children of Israel*, they ought to have had favour shewn them. And we read, not only that *Rahab* and her Father's House was spared, *Josh.* ii. 13, 14. and a Man, with his Family, upon the like account, *Judg.* i. 25. But whoever of these Nations did escape, their Posterity was not to be proceeded against with Severity; the Law which commanded their utter De-

[k] Cunæus l. 2. c. 23. Menass. Ben Isr. conciliat. in Deut. Qu. 8.

struction extending no farther, as [1] *Grotius* concludes, than to that Generation. *Their Children, that were left after them in the Land, whom the Children of Israel also were not able utterly to destroy, upon those did Solomon levy a Tribute of Bond-service unto this day*, 1 Kings ix. 21. 'It doth therefore sufficiently appear, that the *Canaanites* themselves, after all their Provocations against both the Mercy and Justice of God, were not excluded from all the Benefits of *Strangers* and *Proselytes* among the *Jews*; and that Men of all other Nations were encouraged and invited to become Partakers of the Privileges of the Law of *Moses*, or to acquaint themselves at least with the Service and Worship of the True God, is notorious, and as evident as any Thing in the Law and the Prophets. But after the *Canaanites* had filled up the Measure of their Iniquities, God manifested his Almighty Power and Justice upon them; and he was pleased to do it by the Sword of the *Children of Israel*, rather than by Pestilence, or any other Judgment, both to raise the greater Abhorrence of Idolatry in his own People, and in the Neighbouring Nations; and because those rude and warlike Nations could observe the Power of God no where so much as in the Success of War. They chiefly implored their own Gods for Success in their Wars; and when they were overcome by any People, they concluded that the Gods of that Nation were too hard for their own Gods, 1 *Kings* xx. 23. 2 *Kings*. viii. 34. Whereas if they had been destroyed by Famine or Pestilence, they would have ascribed these Judgments no more to the *God* of *Israel*, than to any of the Heathen Gods. But God *got him honour* upon these Nations, as he did *upon Pharaoh and upon all his host*, when *Jethro* said, *Now I know that the Lord is greater than all gods; for in the thing wherein they dealt*

[1] Grot. ad Matt. v. 43.

proudly,

proudly, *he was above them*, Exod. xviii. 11. from whence he is ſo often ſtiled the *Lord of Hoſts*, in the Old Teſtament.

2. The Providence of God did ſo order and diſpoſe of the *Jews*, in all their Affairs, as to afford other Nations frequent Opportunities of becoming inſtructed in the true Religion, and Multitudes of *Proſelytes* were made out of all Nations. *Moſes* dwelt in *Midian* forty Years, *Acts* vii. 30. and there married an *Æthiopian* Woman, *Exod.* ii. 15. *Numb.* xii. 1. His Wife's Father, *Jethro* the Prieſt of *Midian*, and his Family, became converted; and [m] after he had met *Moſes* in the Wilderneſs, he returned to make Proſelytes in his own Country. And the Deliverance of the *Children of Iſrael* out of *Ægypt*, magnified the Power of God in all Countries where the Report of a Thing ſo wonderful and notorious came. The miraculous Victories which the *Iſraelites* gained over the *Canaanites*, where-ever they came, ſtruck a mighty Terror into all thoſe Nations; as we ſee by the Fear of *Balak*, Num. xxii. and from the Speech of *Rahab*, *Joſh.* ii. 9. and of the *Gibeonites*, Joſh. ix. 9, 10. who were glad to make uſe of any Pretence, as an Expedient to ſave themſelves. *Rahab*, with her Family and Kindred, and the *Gibeonites*, were early Acceſſions to the *Iſraelites*; and *Rahab* was married to a Man of *Iſrael*; and the *Babylonian Gemara* [n] reckons up Eight Prophets; who were likewiſe Prieſts, deſcended from her: This is certain, that our Saviour himſelf was pleaſed to derive his Genealogy from her. The various Succeſſes of the *Iſraelites* in the Land of *Canaan*, their Victories and their Overthrows, and the miraculous Power of God viſibly appearing either in their Defeat and Puniſhment, or in their Conqueſt or Deliverance, muſt needs raiſe a mighty Fame and Admiration of the *God of Iſrael* in all thoſe Countries;

[m] Targ. Jonath. Exod. xviii. 27.

[n] Lightfoot Hebr. *and* Talmud. Exercitat. *in* Matt. i. 5.

for

for they proclaim'd a Religious War upon these Nations; they destroy'd their Images and Groves and Altars wherever they came; and the People plainly perceiv'd that their Gods could not help them. The taking of *Jericho*, not by Storm, but only by the mere Sound and Alarm of War, the Lengthening of the Day to favour their Conquests, and the Destruction of so many Kings by *Moses* and *Joshua*, were undeniable Evidences of a Divine Power, and must awaken Men to make Enquiry into that Religion which could inspire such Courage, and work such Wonders. And these Nations among whom the Patriarchs had sojourn'd, and so many Wonders and Judgments had been wrought, were dispers'd in Colonies over all Parts of the World, (as *Bochart* has proved at large, in a most learned and elaborate Work;) some of them (if we may believe *Procopius*) erecting a Pillar in *Africk*, as a Monument of *Joshua*'s Victories, with an Inscription, declaring that they were driven out of their own Country by him. St. *Jerom* says [o] the *Punic* Tongue was derived from the *Hebrew*. And St. *Augustin* says*, That, in his Time, the Country People about *Hippo*, call'd themselves *Canaanites*; and they retain'd their ancient Language, which was little different from the *Hebrew*, not only till the Days of *Plautus*, but even to [p] St. *Augustin*'s Time, as *Salmacius*, with [q] Wonder, observ'd. And it is probably [r] suppos'd, that the *Tyndaridæ*, and others styled *Anaces* by the *Lacedemonians* and *Athenians*, were descended from the *Anakims*, who escaped out of *Palæstine* from *Joshua*.

After the Death of *Joshua*, the *Israelites* were in subjection to the King of *Mesopotamia* eight Years; to the King of *Moab* eighteen Years, *Judg.* iii. 8, 14. to *Jabin* King of *Canaan* twenty Years, *chap.* iv. 3. to the *Midianites* seven Years, *chap.* vi. 1. to the *Philistines*

[o] Lingua Punica, quæ de Hebræorum fontibus manare dicitur, &c. Hieron. in Esaiam cap. vii. * Aug. Expos. Epist. ad Rom.
[p] Aug. contra Lib. Petil. l. 2. c. 104. In Evang. Joh. Tract. 15.
[q] Walt. Proleg. 3. [r] Voss. de Idol. l. 1. c. 13.

stines forty Years, *Chap.* xiii. 1. And still it was because they *had done evil in the sight of the Lord*, that they were given up into the Hand of their Enemies: and upon their Repentance, a Deliverance was wrought for them, *Deut.* xxx. 1. 1 *Sam.* xii. 10. *Bar.* iii. 7. And when they were so often and for so long a time subdued by their Enemies round about them, for their Idolatries, and other Transgressions; and then again, upon their Repentance, were rescued from their Oppressions by *Gideon*, and *Jeptha*, and *Sampson*, all rais'd up for that purpose; this must give great Occasion and Opportunity to all the bordering Nations to know and consider that Religion, the Observation or Neglect whereof had such visible Effects upon its Professors: for under their Affliction, and in the time of their Repentance, the *Israelites* declared the Cause of their Misery, and made known the Power of their own God, and the Vanity and Sinfulness of Idolatry: And therefore their being so often and so long time under the Oppression of their several Enemies, was a merciful Providence to the Nations who had them in Subjection, as well as for the Punishment and Amendment of the *Israelites* themselves. What good Use was made of these Methods of the Divine Providence doth not appear to us, but, in all probability, it had a good Effect upon very many; as we find it had in one remarkable Instance of a little Maid, who being taken Captive, was the Occasion of the Cure of *Naaman*'s Leprosie, and of his Conversion to the Worship of the True God, who before was known to him by his Name *Jehovah*, 2 Kings v. 11. The Prophet *Elisha* was well known by the *Syrians* to be a Prophet, and *Ben-hadad* sent to enquire of the Lord, by him, *chap.* viii. 8. *Rabshakeh* speaks in the *Jews* Language, and pretends a Commission from the Lord, that is, from *Jehovah*, the God of the *Jews*, when he came against *Jerusalem*, Isa. xxxvi. 10, 11. God himself appeals to the Knowledge of *Sennacherib* King of *Assyria*;

Hast

Haſt thou not heard long ago how I have done it, and of ancient time, that I have formed it, Iſa. xxxvii. 26. And Rabbi *Shemaiah* and Rabbi *Abtalion* are [f] ſaid to have been *Proſelytes of Righteouſneſs*, of the Poſterity of *Sennacherib*. The Prophet *Obadiah* is probably thought to have been a Proſelyte of *Idumæa* [t]. *Pharaoh Necho*, King of *Ægypt*, alledges God's Command, when he came to fight againſt *Carchemiſh*, 2 *Chron.* xxxv. 21, 22.

But our preſent Enquiry is not ſo much what the Effect was, as what Means were afforded of Salvation: For though it be requiſite that the True Revealed Religion ſhould be publiſhed to the World; yet it is not neceſſary in order to prove the Truth of a Religion, to ſhew that obſtinate Men have taken notice of it, ſo far as to conſider and believe it; becauſe it is not neceſſary that God ſhould force his Laws upon Men, but only that he ſhould diſcover them, and afford Men ſufficient Means to know them, and become the better for them.

To proceed then: The *Philiſtines* were in a wonderful Conſternation, when they underſtood that the Ark was brought into the Camp, 1 *Sam.* iv. 7, 8. And when it was taken by them, it was more terrible to them, than the Enemy, if he had conquered them, could have been. They were tormented with Diſeaſes and Plagues, whereſoever the Ark was carried; and their God was ſo little able to help them, that he fell down before it, and was broken in Pieces; whereof they retained a Memorial in the Worſhip of him ever after, in not treading upon the Threſhold of *Dagon*, in *Aſhdod*, becauſe he had loſt the Palms of his Hands, by falling upon it, 1 *Sam.* v. 4, 5. And the Manner of ſending back the Ark, with the Treſpaſs-Offering preſcribed by their Prieſts and Diviners, at

[f] Lightfoot Harm. Luke iv. 15. *p.* 612.
[t] Munſt. in Abdiæ. c. 1. Sixt. Senenſ. Bibliothec. l. 1.

the

the Demand of the Lords of the *Philiſtines* was a manifeſt Atteſtation to the Power of the God of *Iſrael: Wherefore then* (ſaid they) *do ye harden your hearts, as the Ægyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? When he had wrought wonderfully among them, did he not let the People go, and they departed*, 1 Sam. vi. 6. The *Philiſtines*, at laſt, received a miraculous Overthrow by Thunder, 1 *Sam.* vii. 10. And theſe were ſo remarkable Judgments, that they muſt be left without all Excuſe, who did not forſake their Idolatries, and turn to the Living God, who had thus manifeſted himſelf amongſt them.

The *Urim* and *Thummim* [u] was conſulted upon any great Undertaking, whereby God returned his Anſwer, and oftentimes, before the Battle, gave Aſſuſurance of Victory. [w] *Joſephus* ſays, the Anſwer was returned, by the ſhining of the Stones in the High-Prieſt's Breaſt-Plate, in ſuch a Manner, as that it was viſible to all the People ſtanding by; and that many of the Heathen, who had been Witneſſes to it, called it the *Oracle*.

The miraculous Victories of *Saul*, and *Jonathan*, and *David*, and *David*'s Stay with *Achiſh* King of the *Philiſtines* at *Gath*, and the Favour and Confidence which he gained with that King, gave the *Canaanites* ſtill repeated Opportunities and Motives to Converſion and Repentance; and we may obſerve *Achiſh*, in Diſcourſe with *David*, mentioning the Name of the Lord, or *Jehovah*, and ſwearing by his Name, 1 *Sam.* xxix. 6. Which ſhews the infinite Mercy and Compaſſion of God towards this People devoted to Deſtruction, in that he would not take them away ſuddenly, but by little and little, giving them Space for Repentance; and turning that, which might ſeem

[u] Judg. i. 1. *and* xx. 18, 23, 26. 1 Sam. xviii. 6. *and* xxiii. 9. *and* xxx. 7, 8.

[w] Joſeph. Antiq. l. 3. c. 9.

to

to rash Judges a hard Fate, into a means of Salvation both to themselves and others.

David extended his Conquest far and near, and was renowned throughout all those Countries: *And the fame of* David *went out into all lands*; *and the Lord brought the fear of him upon all Nations*, 1 Chron. xiv. 17. And when God had delivered him out of the Hand of all his Enemies, he makes this Resolution, *Therefore I will give thanks unto thee, O Lord, among the Heathen, and will sing Praises unto thy Name*, 2 Sam. xxii. 50. Psal. xviii. 49. *Declare his glory among the Heathen, his wonders among all people. Say among the Heathen, that the Lord is King*, Psal. xcvi. 3, 10. And when the Ark was brought with great and solemn Joy, from the House of *Obed-Edom*, the Psalm of Thanksgiving on that Occasion has the same Expressions; *Declare his glory among the Heathen, his marvellous Works among all Nations. Let the Heavens be glad, and let the Earth rejoice, and let Men say among the Nations, the Lord reigneth*, 1 Chron. xvi. 24, 31. He knew this to be the Design of God, in the Dispensations of his Providence; and accordingly he made this Use of it, with so good effect, that in the beginning of *Solomon*'s Reign, the *Strangers* or *Proselytes* in the Land were found to be *an hundred and fifty thousand, and three thousand and six hundred*, 2 Chron. ii. 17. who were all [x] Men fit to be employed in the building of the Temple; and the rest must be supposed very much to exceed that number, reckoning both Sexes, of all Ages.

In *Solomon*'s Reign, the Kingdom of *Israel* became yet more famous and flourishing; *Hiram* King of *Tyre* held great Correspondence with him: And *Kimchi*, and after him Dr. *Lightfoot* [y] understands by 2 *Chron.*

x האנשים הגרום, συνηγαγε ——παντας τας ανδρας τας προσηλυτας, Numeravit——omnes viros proselytos.

y Lightfoot Chorograph. Decad. *on St.* Mark, c. 6. § 2. p. 311.

viii. 2.

viii. 2. that *Hiram* gave Cities to *Solomon* in his own Land, who placed *Israelites* in them; and he, in like manner, gave Cities to *Hiram* in *Galilee*, 1 Kings ix. 11. in Confirmation of the League between them. The Letters which passed between *Solomon* and *Hiram* [z] were extant in the time of *Josephus:* and from his time, down to *Theophilus Antiochenus. Hiram blessed the Lord God of* Israel, *that made Heaven and Earth*, 2 Chron. ii. 12. 1 Kings v. 7. which shews, that he had a true Notion and Sense of Religion. And *Tyre* was a Place of great Trade and Commerce, *Ezek.* xxvii. from whence the *Jews* were afterwards sold to the *Græcians*, *Joel* iii. 6. There was no place of greater Traffick, nor that sent out more Colonies, or greater, or into more distant Parts of the World; and therefore none could be more proper to establish a Correspondence with, from whence Religion might be better propagated. The Queen of *Sheba* came to see the Glory of *Solomon*'s Kingdom, 1 *Kings* ix. 10. and blesseth the Lord his God, *chap.* x. 9. who, according to [a] *Josephus*, was Queen both of *Ægypt* and *Æthiopia*. His Wisdom was every-where magnified: *And there came of all the people to hear the wisdom of* Solomon, *from all kings of the earth, which had heard of his wisdom*, chap. iv. 34. *All the earth sought to* Solomon, *to hear his Wisdom, which God had put in his heart*, chap. x. 24. His Dominions were exceeding great: *He reigned over all the kings from the River* (Euphrates) *even unto the land of the Philistines, and to the border of* Ægypt, 2 Chron. ix. 26. The Trade and Correspondence of the *Israelites* with foreign Nations was mightily advanced in his time; their Trade extended as far as *Tarshish* and *Ophir*. *Tarshish* is translated *Carthage*, by the *Septuagint*, Isa. xxiii. 6. but is supposed to be *Tarteſſus*, in *Spain*, though St. *Jerom* [b] thought it be in the

[z] Theoph. ad Autolyc. l. 3. p. 254. [a] Joseph. Antiq. l. 8. c. 2.
[b] Hier. in Jon. c. 1. initio.

Indies.

Indies. And *Ophir* was, as many learned Men think, in the *Indies*, beyond the River *Ganges*, in *Pegu*, or at least, *Solomon*'s Merchants did traffick with the *Indians* that came from those Parts. Others have imagined *Ophir* to be *Zephala*, or *Cephala*, in *Africa*, towards the *Cape of Good Hope*: Some think it to be *Ceylon*, or *Sumatra*; some are of Opinion that it was in *America*; all are agreed that it must have been in some very distant Part of the World; and where-ever it were, the Traffick and Dealings which the *Israelites* had there, was a great Opportunity to the *Heathen* to become instructed in the True Religion.

The Traffick and Voyages by Sea, and Expeditions by Land, in *Solomon*'s Reign, rendered the People of *Israel* highly renowned, and caused their Laws and Customs and Religion to be much observed and enquired into; and even the Marriages of *Solomon* with *Pharaoh*'s Daughter and other Strangers, questionless, through the Mercy of God, might prove an happy Occasion of divulging the true Religion, and regaining many from Idolatry, in *Ægypt*, and other Parts of the World: For all his Wives were made *Proselytes* [c] before he married them (as *Sampson*'s likewise had been) though afterwards they not only fell away to their former Idolatries, but seduced *Solomon* himself into them.

The *Gentiles* were so forward to become *Proselytes*, [d] in the Reigns of *David* and *Solomon*, that their Sincerity became suspected; and the *Jews* tell us, that the *Sanhedrim* would admit no *Proselytes*, in the Days of *David*, lest they should be induced to it by Fear; nor in the Days of *Solomon*, lest the Glory of his Kingdom should have been the Motive to them to profess the Religion of the *Israelites*. Nevertheless, great Numbers were received privately by Baptism, the *Sanhedrim* neither rejecting nor admitting them.

[c] Maimonid. de Proselyt. § 15, 16. [d] Maimonid. ib.

It

It is the Observation of *Theodoret*, and of St. *Jerom*, upon *Ezek.* v. 5. that God placed *Jerusalem*, the Seat of the *Jewish* Government, in the midst of the Nations, that it might be a Direction to the *Heathen* in Matters of Religion; from whence, as from the Centre, Light might be communicated to the farther Parts of the Earth. But the Divisions and Calamities of the People of *Israel*, the Destruction of their City, and Dispersion of their whole Nation, contributed as much to the Propagation of Religion, as their greatest Prosperity could do.

The Division of the Ten Tribes, after the Death of *Solomon*, and the Erection of the Kingdom of *Israel*, distinct from that of *Judah*, with the many Leagues and Wars which these two mighty Kingdoms had with the Kings of *Ægypt*, and *Syria*, and *Babylon*, and with other Nations, could not but exceedingly conduce to the divulging the True Religion in the World, and give Opportunity to the Prophets to declare their Prophecies, and work their Miracles among the *Heathen*, as we find they did in many Instances. One of the greatest Cities of the World was converted by *Jonah*'s Preaching. Upon the Fasting and Prayer of *Jehoshaphat*, a very numerous Army of *Moabites*, and *Ammonites*, and other Nations, according to the Prediction of *Jehaziel*, destroyed one another: *And the fear of God was on all the kingdoms of those countries, when they had heard that the Lord fought against the enemies of Israel*, 2 Chron. xx. 29. *Hezekiah* being distressed by *Sennacherib*, prayed to God for Deliverance out of his Hand; *that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the Lord God, even thou only:* And his Prayer was answered, not only in the Deliverance, but in the manner of it; which was so wonderful, that all must know, and be astonished at it; for that very Night *the Angel of the Lord went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand*, 2 Kings xix. 19, 35. Which was the fulfilling

of the Prophecy of *Isaiah*, deliver'd to *Hezekiah*, in a Message to him from God, in Answer to his Prayer: And *Sennacherib* returned to *Nineveh* and there fell by the Sword, as the same Prophet had foretold, and never came before *Jerusalem*, ℣ 7, 33, 37. And afterwards Ambassadors came from the King of *Babylon* to enquire of the Wonder, or Miracle, that was wrought in the recovery of *Hezekiah* from his Sickness, 1 *Chron.* xxxii. 31. And at last, the Captivity of the *Jews* for seventy Years in *Babylon*, made their Religion almost as well known there, as in *Jerusalem* it self. *Jeremiah* had foretold the Captivity of the *Jews*, and the Conquest of all the adjacent Couutries, so long and so plainly, before-hand, that all the neighbouring Nations must be sensible of it, as *Nebuchadnezzar* himself also was; for which reason, he gave a strict Charge concerning *Jeremiah*, to *Nebuzaradan* the Captain of the Guard, who declares the reason of their Captivity to be, their Sins against the Lord, or *Jehovah*, Jer.xl. 3. And, as the *Jews* say, he became a *Proselyte*. Their Enemies were sensible of the Cause of their Destruction: *Their adversaries said, we offend not, because they have sinned against the Lord, the habitation of Justice, even the Lord the hope of their Fathers*, Jer. l. 7. God professes, that he had a regard to the Honour of his Name among the *Heathen*, in his Mercies vouchsafed to the *Children of Israel*, or else he had utterly consumed them, *Ezek.* xx. 9. xxxvi. 22, 23, 36. And the Judgments upon the several Nations propheſied against, were to this End, that they might *know him to be the Lord*, Ezek. xxv. 7, 17. xxvi. 6. xxviii. 22, 23, 24. xxix. 6. xxxv. 9. xxxvi. 23. xxxvii. 28. *I am a great King, said the Lord of hosts, and my Name is dreadful among the Heathen*, Mal. i. 14. The *Jews*, in their Captivity, are commanded to make an open Declaration against the Heathen Gods; and because they understood not the *Chaldee* Tongue, the Prophet *Jeremiah* supplies them with so much of the Language

as

as might serve them for that purpose: *Thus shall ye say unto them*, Jer. x. 11. That is, [b] Ye shall speak to them in their own Language, and in the Words, which I now set down to you, to bid defiance to their false Gods. Thus did he fulfil his Commission and Character, who was *sanctified and ordained a Prophet unto the nations*, Jer. i. 5. And *Jeremiah* was put to Death in *Ægypt*, and *Ezekiel* in *Babylon*, for appearing against the Idolatry of those Places.

During the Captivity, *Jehoiachim* was reconciled to the King of *Babylon*, and in great favour with him: *His Throne was set above the throne of the kings that were with him in* Babylon, 2 Kings xxv. 28. The *Jews* were commanded to take Wives for them, and for their Sons, that they might be *encreased there, and not diminished*, (Jer. xxix. 6.) And they were not only considerable for their Number, but were in great Esteem, and in Places of great Honour and Trust; and their Religion was *extolled* and recommended by publick Edicts to all under that vast Empire. The Almighty Power of God was manifested by *Miracles*, and by the *Interpretation of Dreams* and *Prophecies*; and his Majesty and Honour was acknowledged and proclaimed in the most publick and solemn Manner, throughout all the *Babylonian* Empire, at the Command of Princes, who were Idolaters, and were forced to it by the mere Convictions of their own Consciences, wrought in them by the irresistible Power of God, *Dan.* chap. ii, iii, iv, v, vi.

Daniel had acquainted *Cyrus* (as *Josephus* says) with the Prophecy of *Isaiah*, in which he was so long before mention'd by Name: However, the Lord stirred up the Spirit of *Cyrus*, by this or some other means, to

[b] *Linguâ Aramæâ dicunt Interpretes Prophetam idcirco locutum esse, quia Judæos cum Chaldæis disputantes Jeremias instruebat, quomodo iis respondendum esset Linguâ Chaldaicâ.* Abravenel. de Cap. Fidei, c. 20.

accomplish the Prophecy which had been delivered both by *Isaiah* and *Jeremiah*, concerning the Restoration of the *Jews*, after a Captivity of Seventy Years: And *Cyrus* sent forth his Proclamation, declaring that he had received his Kingdom from God, with a Charge to rebuild the Temple at *Jerusalem*, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 23. And this Decree of *Cyrus* was reinforced by *Darius* and *Artaxerxes*, Ezra vi, vii. Now so many several Decrees put forth in Favour of the Religion of the *Jews*, and the miraculous Power and Wisdom which gave Occasion to them, and the Advancement of *Daniel* and others, and the long Life and Continuance of *Daniel* in that Power and Esteem, must leave all the Eastern Part of the World without any Excuse, who were not converted to the Knowledge and Worship of the True God. The Advancement of *Esther* and *Mordecai* under *Ahasuerus*, and of *Nehemiah* under *Artaxerxes*, gave the *Jews* great Authority, and great Opportunities of propagating their Religion *from India even unto Æthiopia, over an hundred and seven and twenty provinces*; for this was the Extent of the Dominions of *Ahasuerus*, Esth. i. 1. And the *Jews* were dispersed *in all the Provinces* of the Kingdom of *Babylon*. chap. iii. 8. And they wanted no Care nor Diligence to improve every Opportunity; as we learn from the Books of *Ezekiel*, *Daniel*, *Ezra*, *Nehemiah*, and *Esther*. And the very Names of such Persons are enough to convince us, that that part of the World could want no Means of Conversion: *Confess him before the Gentiles, ye Children of Israel; for he hath scattered us among them: There declare his greatness, and extol him before all the living: For he is our Lord, and he is the God our Father for ever. In the land of my captivity do I praise him, and declare his might and majesty to a sinful nation*, Tob. xiii. 3, 4, 6. This was the Practice of pious Men among the Ten Tribes, of whom some were likewise in great Place and Authority, *chap.* i. 13, 21, 22.

And

And as the Ten Tribes were first carried away Captive; so, upon the Restoration of the Tribes of *Judah* and *Benjamin*, all but a few, in Comparison of the other Tribes, remained in the Places of their Captivity; and many of [c] those Two Tribes also chose rather to continue in the Territories of *Babylon*, than forsake the Possessions which they enjoyed there: It is supposed, that not much more than half of them returned: And there were afterwards three celebrated Universities [d] of the *Jews* in the Province of *Babylon*, *Nehardea*, *Pombeditha*, and *Soria*, besides several other Places famous for Learning. The *Jews* relate, [e] that the Ten Tribes were carried away not only into *Media* and *Persia*, but into the Northern Countries beyond the *Bosphorus*; and *Ortelius* finds them in *Tartary*. The *Odomantes*, a People of *Thrace*, were Circumcised; and the [f] *Scholiast* of *Aristophanes* says, that they were reported to be *Jews*. In Process of Time they went as far as *China*.

The Restoration of the *Jews* by *Cyrus*, who had been so long before appointed and named by God himself for that Work, was ordained for this End that *they might know, from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is no God besides him*, Isa. xlv. 6. The Conquests of *Cyrus* opened a great Correspondence between the Nations of the World; and his particular Favour to the *Jews*, made them much taken Notice of by other Nations: And it is observable, that after the Captivity, the *Jews* were never given to Idolatry; and though they were before too much addicted to it, yet this gave Occasion to *Prophecies* and *Miracles* to withdraw them from it; and these, with the Judgements of God which befel them for their

[c] Joseph. Antiq. l. 11. c. 1. Mede's Discourse, 20. p. 75.
[d] Buxtorf. Tiber c. 6. Lightf. Harm. N. T. p. 335. Exercitat. *on* Acts, p. 681, 709. [e] Hier. *in* Zech. x.
[f] Aristophan. Acharnens. Act. 1. Scen. 4.

Iniquities, gave continual Manifestations to the World of the Truth of their Religion.

When the Ten Tribes were carried from *Samaria*, and strange Nations were transplanted thither in their room, God would not suffer his Name and Worship to be quite neglected and forgotten amongst them, but they were forced to send for a Priest back again, to teach them *the fear of the Lord*, 2 King. xvii.

And after the taking of *Jerusalem* by *Nebuchadnezzar*, and the Death of *Gedaliah*, who was set over them that were left behind in the Land of *Judah*, all the People that were not before carried to *Babylon*, fled into *Ægypt*, *Jeremiah* being forced along with them, who there prophesied against *Ægypt*, and foretold its Destruction by the *Babylonians*, Jer. xliii. And at last suffered Martyrdom. Their going into *Ægypt*, was indeed contrary to the Word of the Lord by *Jeremiah*; but the Providence of God so order'd things, that *Jeremiah* should be carry'd thither with the rest, to testifie against their Wickedness and Obstinacy, and to denounce God's Judgments upon them, and upon the *Ægyptians*, in whom they placed their Confidence, rather than in the Living God, and then to die in Testimony of the Truth of what he had delivered.

Cyrus and *Darius* desired the Prayers and Sacrifices of the *Jews*, in behalf of themselves and their Kingdoms. *Alexander the Great*, *Ptolemæus Philadelphus*, *Augustus*, *Tiberius*, and *Vitellius*, sent *Victims* to be sacrificed at the Temple of *Jerusalem*, as we learn from *Philo* and *Josephus*. The *Jews* constantly offer'd Sacrifices and Prayers for the Kings and Emperors under whom they lived, and for their Allies and Confederates, 1 *Maccab.* vii. 33. and xii. 11. And it was expected of them; for the Omission of this, contrary to their known and approved Custom in all former Times, was the thing which hasten'd their final Destruction by the *Romans*.

The-

The Course of *Alexander*'s Victories was so unexpected, so sudden, and every way so wonderful, that it alarm'd the World: And no Man can believe that this was design'd by Providence only to gratify the Ambition and Vanity of a rash Youth, but to open a Way for a Communication between the several parts of the Earth, to the Benefit of Mankind, in the Improvement of all useful Knowledge; and when this Work was done, he was no longer the same Man he had been before, but soon resign'd his Conquests with his Life.

It is observable, that *Alexander* was exceedingly addicted to † Learning, that he had Philosophers with him, and design'd to introduce the *Greek* Tongue, by his Conquests, and establish it as the Universal Language. For [g] when he left the Mother and Children of *Darius* at *Susa*, he took care to appoint them Instructors in this Tongue. He [h] erected about seventy Cities among the Barbarous Nations, mixing *Greeks* with the Natives, and [i] order'd thirty thousand Boys to be educated in the *Greek* Learning: Which had its Effect to succeeding [k] Ages.

[l] *Pliny* acquaints us, that *Alexander* was in *Judæa*. He is said by [m] *Josephus*, to have gone to the Temple at *Jerusalem*, and offer'd Sacrifice, and to have been mightily encouraged in his Enterprize against *Persia*, by the Prophecy of *Daniel:* He remitted the Tribute of every seventh Year, in which, by their Law, they were obliged not to sow their Ground; [n] which was afterwards remitted to them likewise by the *Romans:* He granted the *Jews*, who in great Numbers listed themselves in his Army, the free Ex-

† Cic. pro Archiâ. p. 354. § 6.
g Diodor. Sic. l. 17.
h Plut. de Fortun. Alex. Orat. 1.
i Id. in Vit. Alex.
k *Quid sibi volunt in mediis Barbarorum Regionibus Græcæ urbes? Quid inter Indos Persasque Macedonicus sermo?* Sen. Consol. ad Helv. c. ult.
l Hist. Nat. l. 12. c. 25.
m Joseph. Antiq. l. 11.
n Ibid. l. 14. c. 17.

ercise of their Religion, and promised to grant the same to the *Jews* of *Babylon* and *Media*; and those of *Sanballat*'s Faction, who followed him into *Ægypt*, he placed in *Thebais*.

Hecatæus, who lived in *Alexander*'s Time, wrote [o] a Book concerning the *Jews*, in which he took Notice of their great Zeal for their Law; which he proves by this Instance, That when *Alexander* repaired the Temple of *Belus* at *Babylon*, his Soldiers, who were *Jews*, could by no Means be brought to help forward that Work; and at last the King excused them. He related, that *Hezechias* the High-Priest of the *Jews*, a Venerable Man of about Sixty six Years of Age, of great Prudence and Experience, and withal very eloquent, whom he knew and had conversed with, was one, amongst others, who followed *Ptolemæus Lagi*, after the Battle at *Gaza*, in which he overcame *Demetrius Poliorcetes*. He mentioned likewise, that *Mosollamus* a *Jew*, marching with him, when the rest made a Stand, by reason of a Bird, the Stay or Flight whereof, the Augur said, was to be a Direction to them in their March, shot that Bird in the Sight of them all, and defended what he had done, by Argument. And indeed, the *Jews* wanted neither Zeal, nor Wit, nor Courage, upon every Occasion, to appear in behalf of their own Religion, against the Superstitions and Idolatries of the *Heathen*. This Book of *Hecatæus* was extant in the Time of *Josephus*, who refers his Reader to it, and remained till [p] *Eusebius*'s Time, who cites a large Passage out of it, in which is related this Action of *Mosollamus*. And *Josephus* appeals to the Letters of *Alexander the Great*, and of *Ptolemæus Lagi*, and the Kings of *Ægypt* his Successors, in Favour of the *Jews*.

[o] Joseph. contra Ap. l. 1. p. 1048. *&c.*

[p] Euseb. Præpar. Evang. l. 9. c. 4. *In* Eusebius, *he is called* Mosomamus *by a Mistake. The Hebrew Name* Meshullam *is in the LXX.* Mosollam, 1 *Chron.* ix. 7, *&c.*

When

When *Ptolemæus Lagi* [q] took *Jerusalem*, he transplanted the *Jews* in great Multitudes into *Ægypt*, putting many of them into his Garrisons, and allowing them equal Privileges with the *Macedonians*; by which Encouragement, many, besides those whom he transported, voluntarily went to dwell there. And the Captives of that Nation, set at Liberty by *Ptolemæus Philadelphus*, were 120000. And besides the signal Favours and Honours bestowed upon the *Jews*, by *Ptolemæus Philadelphus* (who likewise caused the Holy Scriptures to be translated into the *Greek* Tongue, which was an exceeding great Furtherance to the Propagation of Religion) [r] *Seleucus Nicanor* granted them the Freedom of *Antioch*, and of the Cities which he had founded in *Asia*, and the *Lower Syria*; and these Privileges remained to them 'till *Josephus*'s Time, after all which the *Jews* had done to deserve to be deprived of them.

Antiochus the Great sent forth his Letters and Edicts, which are to be seen in [f] *Josephus*, in Favour of the *Jews*, more especially in what related to their Religious Worship. And *Seleucus*, Son to this *Antiochus*, after his Father's Example, out of his own Revenues, bore the Cost belonging to his Sacrifices, 2 *Mac.* iii. 3. *Antiochus Epiphanes* himself, at last, under the avenging Hand of God upon him, for all his impious Cruelties, acknowledged himself punished for his Sacrilege and other Mischiefs committed at *Jerusalem*, 1 Mac. vi. 12, 13. *and* 2 *Mac.* ix. 17.

Antiochus Pius, when he besieged *Jerusalem*, [t] not only granted a Truce for Seven Days, during the *Feast of Tabernacles*, but sent rich and noble Presents for Sacrifices; and a Peace being concluded upon honourable Conditions, with regard particularly to Religion, *Joannes Hyrcanus* accompanied *Antiochus* in

[q] Joseph. Antiq. l. 12. c. 1, 2. [r] Ibid. c. 3. [f] Ibid.
[t] Ibid. l. 13. c. 16. Plutarch. Apophthegm. p. 184. Edit. Par.

his

his *Parthian* Expedition; and *the Feast of Pentecost* falling the Day after the *Sabbath*, *Antiochus* stopt his Army those two Days, for the sake of the *Jews*.

The *Lacedæmonians* claimed [v] Kindred with the *Jews*, and [w] are supposed to be partly descended from *Abraham* by *Hagar* or *Kethura*, and partly from the *Canaanites*, who fled for fear of *Joshua*, and both [x] They and the *Athenians* and *Romans* enter'd into Leagues with them, which from time to time were continu'd and renew'd. *Josephus* mentions a Pillar then standing at *Alexandria*, containing the Privileges [y] granted to the *Jews* by *Julius Cæsar*, [z] whose Death was much lamented by that People. [a] A great part of the City beyond the *Tiber* was inhabited by *Jews*, and most of them had the Freedom of the City granted to them. [b] *Dio* observes, that they prevail'd so far as to make Laws for themselves. And when no other Religion was tolerated, except those establish'd by the Laws of the Empire, the *Jews* only had Allowance for a free Exercise of their Religion even in *Rome* it self; and for this and many other Edicts and Decrees of the Senate in favour of the *Jews*, *Josephus* [c] appeals to the Tables of Brass then extant, and preserv'd in the Capitol and other Places, in which they were engraven: [d] Most of which Decrees are wanting in the printed Editions of *Josephus*, but are inserted in the MSS. Copies, and in the Old Version, tho' very imperfect.

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[v] 1 Mac. viii. xii. xiv. 2 Mac. xi. [w] Ger. Voss. de Idolol. l. 1. c. 13. [x] Joseph. Antiq. l. 13. c. 9. l. 14. c. 16. Justin. l. 36. c. 3. [y] Joseph. contra Ap. l. 2. [z] Suet. in Jul. Cæs. c. 84.

[a] Philo. de Legat. ad Caium. [b] Dio. l. 36.

[c] Joseph. Antiq. l. 14. c. 16. l. 16. c. 4, 5, 10. l. 19. c. 4, 6.

[d] Is. Voss. de Sibyll. Orac. p. 43. Isaac Vossius *had design'd to publish them: They are lately publish'd by* Gronovius *under this Title*; Decreta Romana & Asiatica pro Judæis ad cultum Divinum per Asiæ Minoris Urbes securè obeundum, ab Josepho collecta in lib. XIV. Archæolog. sed malè interversa & expuncta in lucem publicam utilitatemque restituta.

The

The Sufferings and Martyrdoms under the *Maccabees*, and the Resolution and Constancy which they shew'd upon all Occasions, in defence of their Religion, render'd the *Jews* renowned over all Nations: And besides, their Conquests were very considerable; and the Advantages which accrued to Religion by reason of them. In the time of *Johannes Hyrcanus*, [e] all *Idumæa* embraced the *Jewish* Religion. *Aristobulus* having conquer'd great part of *Ituræa*, caused all their Males [f] to be circumcis'd, and to observe the Law of *Moses*, as *Strabo* testifies. Under *Alexander Jannæus*, [g] the *Jews* took twelve Cities from the *Arabians*, and became possess'd of many Cities in *Syria Idumæa*, and *Phœnicia*, all which they brought over to the Profession of their own Religion, and demolish'd *Pella* for refusing to embrace it.

The [h] Temple built by *Sanballat*, for *Manasses*, who had marry'd his Daughter, was an occasion of the *Samaritans* leaving their False Gods. * *Josephus*, [i] *Epiphanius* and † *Theophylact* clear them from the Imputation of Idolatry; and [k] that they now are either Idolaters or *Sadducees*, is a Calumny of the *Jews*. The Zeal of the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, though they were Hypocrites, did exceedingly conduce to the Propagation of their Religion; for *they compassed sea and land to make one Proselyte*, and so far they were to be commended; but then they made him *two-fold more the child of hell than themselves*, Mat. xxiii. 15. Yet still they taught the necessary Points of Doctrine, tho' in Hypocrisy, and with the mixtures of Superstition. Our Saviour commands his Disciples to *observe and do what they bid them*, but *not to do after their Works*. And it was requir'd of the Fathers of the *Sanhedrin*, [l] that they

[e] Jos. Ant. l. 13. c. 17. [f] Ibid. l. 13. c. 19. [g] Ibid. l. 13. c. 23. l. 14. c. 2. [h] *See Mr.* Mead's *Discourse* 12.
* Joseph. l. 9. [i] Epiphan. Hær. 9. § 2. † *In* Joh.
[k] F. Simon's Suppl. *to* Leo *of* Modena. [l] Lightf. Exercit. *on* 1 Cor. xiii. 1. p. 783.

should

should understand many Languages, that the *Sanhedrin* might hear nothing by an Interpreter; which qualified the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, who aspired to that Dignity, to be the better able to make *Proselytes*.

The *Jews* were dispersed over all the World, but chiefly seated themselves in *Rome* and *Alexandria*, and *Antioch*, the three principal Cities of the Empire; in all which they had great and peculiar Privileges. In *Alexandria* they had Magistrates of their own, [m] and lived under a peculiar Government by themselves. In *Ægypt* they had a Temple [n] like that of *Jerusalem*, built by *Onias*, which * drew mighty Numbers of the *Jews* thither, and continued for the Space of three hundred and forty three Years, till the Destruction of *Jerusalem* by *Titus*. And after the Building of that *Temple*, the *Babylonian Talmud* says, that [o] the *Jews* in *Ægypt* were double the Number of those that came out from thence under *Moses*. Never any other Nation had such various Changes and Revolutions, to mix them with the rest of the World; and never any People were so industrious and zealous, and so successful in the Propagation of their Religion. They had their Synagogues at *Athens*, *Corinth*, *Ephesus*, *Thessalonica*, and in all the Chief Cities of *Greece*, *Acts* xvii. 1, 17. xviii. 7. xix. 8. They had their *Proseuchæ*, and their Synagogues for Divine Worship, and for Reading and Explaining the Scriptures; which Men of [p] all Religions were admitted to hear, in all Places where-ever they dwelt; and in the Synagogues the Scriptures were read in the *Greek* Tongue, which was the most universal Language then in the World. Some have affirmed, that as much of the Scriptures as was written in *Solomon*'s Time, was then translated into the *Syriac* Tongue; and there is little doubt

[m] Joseph. Antiq. l. 14. c. 12. Philo in Flacc.
[n] Joseph. Bell. Jud. l. 7. c. 30. * Hieron. in Dan. xi.
[o] Lightf. Harm. p. 205. [p] *Acts* xiii. 42.

[q] but

[q] but that at least part of the Bible was translated into *Greek*, before the Time of *Alexander the Great:* But the Version of the *Septuagint* became soon dispersed into all Hands, which was made at the Command of *Ptolemæus Philadelphus*; to whom likewise, and his Father, [r] *Aristobulus* dedicated an Exposition of the Law of *Moses*. The *Jews* in their Kalendar appoint a Fast upon the Eighth Day of the Month *Tebet*, which answers to our Twenty Sixth of *December*, because the Law was then translated into *Greek* at the Command of this King, and [s] they add, that there was Darkness all over the World for Three Days upon that account. But this must have been a Contrivance of the Jews since the Propagation of the Gospel, when they found this Translation cited against them, and were urged by *Justin Martyr* and others with its Authority. The Jews of *Alexandria* kept a Day of Rejoicing, in Remembrance of this Translation, [t] in *Philo*'s Time, and [u] *Josephus* speaks with Approbation of the making it. But [w] when the Jews sent Men purposely chosen, into all Countries, to blaspheme Christ and his Religion, and inserted Imprecations upon Christians into their Forms of Prayer; it is no wonder, that they should appoint a Fast in Detestation of a Translation, which proved so happy an Instrument in the Conversion of many to Christianity.

By all these means, vast Multitudes of *Proselytes* were made to the *Jewish* Religion in all Parts of the World. What Numbers there were at *Rome* of this Religion, we know from the *Roman* Poets and Historians; and we have as good Evidence of the spreading of it in other Places. Not to repeat what has been already related, nor to mention particular Per-

[q] Just. Apol. 2. Clem. Alex. Strom. 1. Euseb. Præpar. Evang. l 9. c. 6. l. 13. c. 12.
[r] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 7. c. ult.
[s] Scalig. Isagog. [t] Phil. de Vit. Mos. l. 3.
[u] Joseph. Antiq. l. 12. c. 2. [w] Just. Dial.

sons of the greatest Note and Eminency, nor particular Cities, as *Damascus*, besides those already mentioned, [x] where it more remarkably prevail'd, it is evident what Numbers of Persons, in all Nations, profess'd this Religion, from the incredible Treasures which *Crassus* found in the Temple of *Jerusalem*, being Ten Thousand Talents, amass'd there by the Sums of Gold sent from all Places by the *Jews*, and such as became Proselytes to their Religion: And for the Truth of this, *Josephus* cites *Strabo*'s Authority, who says, [y] that the *Jews* were every where disper'd, and every where gain'd Men over to their Religion; and that in *Alexandria* they had their *Ethnarchæ*, or proper Magistrates, by whom they were governed. And another Proof of the Multitudes of *Proselytes* made to the *Jewish* Religion, may be had from the great Numbers assembled [z] at their *Passovers*, and at the *Feasts of Pentecost*, out of every Nation under Heaven.

Thus mightily prevail'd the Religion of the *Hebrews*, till their City and Temple, by a Divine Vengeance, as *Josephus* often confesses, was destroy'd; and the Law [a] it self, with the Utensils of the Temple, was carried among the Spoil in *Titus*'s Triumph. And when the *Jewish* Religion had its full Period and Accomplishment, the *Christian Religion*, which succeeded in the room of it, and was prefigur'd by it, soon spread itself into all Corners of the Earth, and is at this Day preach'd among all Nations.

But before I proceed to consider the Propagation of the *Christian Religion*, it may be requisite, I. To produce some Testimonies of the Heathen, concerning the *Jews* and their Religion. II. To shew, That there have been always remaining divers Memorials

[x] Joseph. de Bell. Jud. l. 2. c. 25.

[y] Joseph. Antiq. l 14. c. 12. Vid. Phil. in Flacc. & de Legatione ad Caium. [z] Joseph. de Bell. Jud. l. 7. c 17. *Acts* ii. 5.

[a] Ibid. c. 24. pag. 979.

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of the True Religion among the Heathen. III. To consider the Authority of the *Sibylline* Oracles.

I. As to the Testimony of Heathen Authors, it were no more an Objection against what has been alledg'd, though they had taken no Notice of the History of the *Jews*, than it can be supposed to be an Objection against the Truth of the taking of *Troy*, or the building of *Rome*, that the Scriptures make no mention of either of them: Nor than it can invalidate the concurrent Testimony of Historians, concerning the Antiquity and Fame of *Tyre*, that [b] *Homer* makes no mention of it, tho' he often takes occasion to extol its Neighbour City *Sidon*. The *Greek* Historians were so ignorant of Foreign Affairs, as [c] *Josephus* has observ'd, that *Ephorus*, one of the best of them, thought *Spain* to be but one City; and neither *Herodotus* nor *Thucydides*, nor any Historian of their Times, made any mention of the *Romans*. The *Roman* Authors are but of a very late Date, in comparison: And the *Greeks*, besides their Ignorance in Antiquity, and in the Affairs of other Nations, are known to have been a vain People, who despised all besides themselves, accounting them [d] *Barbarians*, and taking little notice of *Rome* it self before they fell under its Power. Nothing more memorable ever befel the *Romans* than the taking of their Cities by the *Gauls*: this happened, says [e] *Plutarch*, if we may credit their Chronology, which is so confused in things of much later Date, a little after the Year CCCLX, from the building of *Rome*. He thinks an obscure Report of this went as far as *Greece*; for which he cites *Heraclides Ponticus*, an Author of no Credit, as he confesses; and *Aristotle*, who said that *Lucius* preserved

[b] *Strabo* lib. 16. Ὁμηρος δε ὐδε μεμνηται της τυρου.

[c] Joseph. contra Ap. l. 1.

[d] *Nos quoque dictitant barbaros, & spurciùs nos, quàm alios, Opicos appellatione fœdant* Cato Maj. apud Plin. Hist. Nat. l. 29. c. 7.

[e] Plutarc. in Camil.

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the City; tho' the *Prænomen* of *Camillus* was *Marcus*, and not *Lucius:* Which is an evident Argument how little the ancient *Greeks* knew of *Rome.* [f] *Pliny* observes, that *Theophrastus* was the first that wrote any Thing, with Exactness of the *Romans*, and that *Theopompus*, before whom no Author had mentioned them, only said, that the City was taken by the *Gauls*; and *Clitarchus*, who next took any Notice of it, said only, that an Embassy was sent from thence to *Alexander*; but *Arrian* [g] proves that none was sent. The Affairs both of the *Romans* and *Carthaginians*, before the second *Punic* War, were but little known to the *Greeks:* For which Reason [h] *Polybius* found it requisite in his Two first Books, to give an Account of the preceding State of *Rome*, before he entred upon the History of that War.

Yet many of the *Heathen* Writers, as *Josephus* shews, have made famous Mention of the *Jews*; though others have given a wrong and malicious Account of them, whom he proves to contradict one another, and sometimes themselves. Some, again, have omitted the Mention of the *Jews*, though they had never so much Occasion for it: Of which he gives a remarkable Instance in one *Hieronymus*, who though he were Governor of *Syria*, and wrote a Book *of the Successors of Alexander*, and lived at the same Time with *Hecatæus*, both being contemporary with *Alexander*; yet never vouchsafed to speak of the *Jews*, of whom *Hecatæus* wrote a particular Book. The general Silence in relation to the *Jews*, in the Histories of *Alexander*'s Life which are now extant, could proceed from nothing but Envy and Ill-will; since it is incredible, that a People so very considerable as the *Jews*, should be the only Nation, whom he over-looked, without requiring the least Submission from them. But *Pliny*

[f] Plin. Hist. l. 3. c. 9.
[g] Arrian. de Expedit. Alex. l. viii. c. 15.
[h] Polyb. l. 1. init.

to

[i] to whom we owe divers Things, omitted by the proper Historians, informs us of *Alexander*'s being in *Judæa*. *Demetrius* [k] *Phalareus* wrote an Historical Account of the Kings of the Jews. The Works of *Hecatæus*, of *Demetrius*, and of many other *Greek* Authors, are now lost, which were written concerning the *Jews*, the Fragments whereof are still to be seen in *Josephus*, *Clem. Alexandrinus*, *Eusebius* and others. Of those whose Works remain, *Herodotns*, relating the Victory of *Pharaoh Necho*, in the Battle at *Megiddo*, calls *Jerusalem*, *Cadytis*; by a small Variation, as [l] Dr. *Lightfoot* has observed, for *Kedosha*, that is, the *Holy City*, the usual Denomination of that City. [m] *Herodotus* likewise saying, that Circumcision was used by the *Syrians* in *Palæstine*, must mean the *Jews*: for [n] all others there were uncircumcised: Tho' when he says, that they acknowledged themselves to have received it from the *Ægyptians*, this shews, how much he was misinformed concerning them, and how justly the Ignorance of *Herodotus* in Things relating to the *Ægyptians*, is by [o] *Scaliger* ascribed to the Partiality of the *Ægyptian* Priests, from whom he had his Informations: For they concealed all that was disgraceful, and told him nothing, but that which was for the Glory of their own Nation. And this Observation may well be applied to other Instances, besides that, which gave *Scaliger* the Occasion to make it; and to other *Historians*, besides *Herodotus*. It is [p] probable, that Circumcision was introduced by *Joseph* into *Ægypt*. The *Colchi* are thought to have received it from the Ten Tribes dispersed throughout those Countries, and the *Æthiopians* from the Posterity of *Abraham* by

[i] *Alexandro Magno res ibi (in Judæâ) agente.* Plin. Hist. lib. 12. c. 25. [k] Joseph. contra Ap. l. 1. Clem. Alex. Strom. 1.
[l] Lightf. Chorog. *on St.* Mark, c. 3. § 6. vid. Prideaux Hist. O. *and* N. T. p. 57. [m] Herod. l. 2. c. 104. [n] Joseph. contra Ap. l. 1.
[o] Scalig. Not. in Græc. Fragm. p. 11. [p] Grot. Ep. 327.

Ketura. All the [q] Nations, of whom we have any Account that they observ'd Circumcision, were either in the Neighbourhood of *Palæstine*, or had some Affinity or Communication with the *Hebrews*. [r] *Strabo* mentions *Moses* and the ancient *Jews* with Commendation: He says, that many, in honour to the Divine Majesty, went out of *Ægypt* with *Moses*, rejecting the Worship of the *Ægyptians* and other Nations, inasmuch as *Moses* instructed them, that God was not to be worshipped by any Image, and that he would reveal himself only to the Pure and Virtuous. He observes, that *Moses* had great Success in the establishment of his Government, and the Reception of his Laws among the neighbouring Nations, and that his Successors, for some Ages, pursued the same Methods, being Just, and truly Religious. Which Words, [s] *Isaac Casaubon* remarks, deserve to be written in Letters of Gold. [t] *Diodorus Siculus* names *Moses* among the chief Law-givers of ancient Times. [v] *Cadmus Milesius* and *Acusilaus Argivus*, the two ancientest *Greek* Historians, lived but a while before the *Persian* Expedition into *Greece*. We have but four *Greek* Historians remaining, who wrote before the *Reign* of *Julius Cæsar*; and in the first of them, *Herodotus*, we find Passages relating to the *Jews*; but *Thucydides* and *Xenophon* confining themselves to particular Histories, could have no occasion to take notice of them: And *Polybius*'s History is most of it lost, who,

[q] *Multarum ex quadam parte Gentium, & maximè quæ Judææ Palæstinæque confines sunt, usque hodie populi circumciduntur, & præcipuè Ægyptii & Idumæi, Ammonitæ & Moabitæ, & omnis Regio Sarrecenorum, quæ habitat in solitudine —— cùm præter Ægyptios, Idumæos, Ammonitas, & Moabitas, Hismaelitas in solitudine commorantes, quorum plerumque pars circumcisa est; omnes aliæ Nationes in toto orbe incircumcisa sint carne.* Hieron. in Hierem. ix. 25.

[r] Strab. l. 16 [s] Comment. in Strab. ib. [t] Diod. Sic. l. 1.

[v] Josephus. contr. Ap. l. 1. sub. init.

in his [w] Sixteenth Book, not only mention'd the *Jews*, but said of *Jerusalem*, that much was to be spoken of it, especially by reason of the Fame of the Temple, which he deferred to another opportunity. But we see, the next general Historians, *Diodorus Siculus*, and *Strabo* the Geographer, mention them with Honour.

Trogus Pompeius seems to have been one of the first learned *Romans* that ever undertook to write a *Latin* History; for the [x] ancient Histories written by *Romans* even of Consular Dignity, concerning *Roman* Affairs, were in the *Greek* Tongue: *Trogus* was the first, at least, that attempted an Universal History in the *Roman* Language, and he lived but in *Augustus*'s time. He says so much Truth of the *Jews*, that his Mistakes are the more excusable; since from an Epitome only of so great a Work, it cannot be known from whence they might proceed. From his Mistakes we may conclude, that he had not his Informations from the *Jews*, and therefore did not write partially in favour of them. He [y] attributes their prosperous and flourishing State to a Mixture of Justice with Religion in their Government. He gives a very high Character of *Joseph*, saying, that being through Envy sold by his Brethren to foreign Merchants, who carried him into *Ægypt*, he soon became very dear to the King; that he was the first that understood the Interpretation of Dreams, that he foretold a Famine many Years before it happened, and preserved *Ægypt*, by advising the King to provide Stores of Corn against the time of Famine; and that there had been so much Experience of the Truth of his Answers, that they seem'd to be given rather by a God than by a Man. [z] *Pliny* says, *Jerusalem* was the most famous City, not

[w] Joseph. Antiq. l. 12. c. 3. [x] Justin. Præf. Dion. Halicar. l. 1. [y] Justin. l. 36. c. 2. [z] Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 14.

only of *Judæa*, but of the whole *East*. [a] *Tacitus* himself gives this Testimony of the *Jews*, That they worshipped the Supreme, Eternal, Immutable Being. [b] *Dion Cassius* speaking to the same Purpose, says, that many had written of the God of the *Jews*, and of the Worship which they paid him. But above all, *Varro*, [c] the learnedest of the *Romans*, much approved their Way of Worship, as being free from that Idolatry which he could not but dislike in the *Heathen Religion*. And it is generally agreed by all, that the Religion of the *Jews* was received all over the World; and, as [d] *Seneca* expressed it, *Victi victoribus leges dederunt*.

II. There have been always remaining divers Memorials and Remembrances of the True Religion amongst the *Heathen*. The Flood of *Noah* and the Ark [e] were generally taken notice of by *Heathen* Historians; and the Account of the Flood of *Deucalion* was [f] plainly transcribed from that of *Noah*. * *Jove* is a plain Depravation of the Word *Jehovah*; and *Diodorus Siculus* said, [g] that *Moses* professed, that he received his Laws from the God Ἰαω, which is another Variation from it, or from *Jah*, which is a Word often used in the Old Testament. But both the Fathers and the Modern Criticks generally derive *Jao* from the [h] *Tetragrammaton*. And this proves the Antiquity of the *Heathen* Tradition concerning the True God; since the *Jews* of latter Times would not speak the Name themselves, much less communicate it to others. *Apollo Clarius* being consulted to know who the God *Jao* was; answered, That he is the Supreme God of All, (as [i] *Macrobius* informs us from *Cornelius Labeo*:)

[a] Tacit. Hist. l. 15. [b] Dio. l. 37. [c] S. Aug. Civ. Dei, l. 4. c. 31. [d] Ibid. l. 6. c. 11. [e] Joseph Antiq. l. 1. c. 4. Euseb. Præp. l. 9. c. 12. [f] Lucian. de Deâ Syr. & in Timon. Plut. de Solert. Animal. * *Mercurius*, *Jovis*, *Neptunus*, *Vulcanus*, *Apollo*. Enn. Epigr. [g] Diod. Sic. l. 1. [h] *Vid.* Voss. de Idololatr. l. 1. c. 32. Bochart. Hieroz. Part. 1. l. 2. c. 18. Walton. Prolegom. 8. § 19. [i] Macrob. Saturn. l. 1. c. 18. Fuller. Miscell. l. 2. c. 6.

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which both shews, that the *Heathen* had Knowledge of the God *Jehovah*, and that the *Oracles* themselves were sometimes forced to confess Him to be the Supreme God, tho' obscurely, and under some Disguise, to amuse those to whom their Answers were returned; as here, *Apollo* would have him believed to be *Bacchus*. So *Plutarch* and others thought him. But *Tacitus* rejected this Opinion, [k] which was occasioned by the Observation of the *Feast of Tabernacles*, and of *Trumpets*, and the *Day of Atonement* in Autumn, and by some other Rites; and their *Sabbaths*, were supposed to be in Honour of *Bacchus*, who was called likewise *Sabbus*. The *Tetragrammaton*, or *Jehovah*, is likewise supposed to be meant by the *Tetractys* of *Pythagoras*; and Ελελευ, a Word used in Songs and Acclamations, has a plain Allusion to *Alleluia*, especially with the Addition of ιε as ελελευ ιε. The *Septuagint* retain the Hebrew Word ἑλλελιμ, Songs or Hymns, *Judg.* ix. 27. *Jubilare*, *Festus* says, was a Rustick Word signifying to *cry out*, but the *Tusci* or *Tyrrheni*, were descended from the *Tyrians*, who were Neighbours and Allies to the *Jews*. *Grotius* [l] and others are of Opinion, that the *Ægyptians* imitated the *Urim* and *Thummim*.

From a learned and large Account of Mr. *Selden*'s [m] upon that Subject, it appears, that there was a general Observation among the *Heathen*, of one Day in seven; tho' Length of Time and Corruption of Manners had greatly obscured or quite blotted out the Remembrance of the Original Institution; or Superstition

[k] Tacit. Hist. l. 5. c. 5. Plut. Symposiac. l. 4. c. 5.

[l] *Omnino ex his duobus locis* [Ælian. l. 14. c. 34. Diod. Sic. l. 1.] *apparet, Gentes vicinas imitatas morem Hebræorum; ut solet Diabolus esse Dei simia.* Grot. de Imp. Sum. Potest. c. 6. § 8. *Morem hunc non Moysen ab Ægyptiis accepisse, sed contra ab Hebræis ad Ægyptios esse translatum, ipsa ratio & veritas exigit —— Huc accedit, quod ipsimet Ægyptii magnam religionis & rituum suorum partem Chaldæis, id est, Hebræis acceptam ferant.* If. Voss de Translat. LXX. Interpr. c. 16.

[m] Seld. de Jur. Nat. & Gent. l. 3. c. 15.

tion had by degrees assigned other Reasons for it: And this is sufficient to reconcile *Josephus* and other Authors with what he brings, which seems to imply the contrary. He [n] likewise holds it probable, that *the ancient and most known Example of Abraham* gave occasion to the Payment of Tythes by the *Greeks*, and *Romans* and *Carthaginians*, as well as by the *Phœnicians* and *Arabians*. And as to the last, he produces an Instance, which shews, that they must have had this Custom from the *Hebrews*: For [o] in *Arabia Felix*, all Merchants were obliged to carry their Frankincense to *Sabota* the Capital City, and there to offer the Tythe of it to their God *Sabis*; and they were permitted to sell none till this was done. *Sabis*, as he observes, was a Corruption from *Zaboth*, an usual Attribute of the True God. It has been proved by several, and is generally agreed by learned Men, that many of the Rites among the *Ægyptians* and other Nations were the same with those appointed by the Law of *Moses*, or very like them. But some would have it, that *Moses* took these Rites from those Nations, without any Proof, or possibility of Proof, that I can perceive. For how should it be proved, when we have no Writings or Memorials of these Nations so ancient as those of *Moses* by many Ages? And we read in the Scriptures, that several Laws were enjoin'd the *Jews*, because they were contrary to the Idolatrous Practices of the *Heathens*, but never find the least Intimation that any were given them in Imitation of the *Gentile* Worship; and it is unreasonable to imagine that they should have Laws appointed in contradiction to the Idolatrous Worshippers, and others at the same time in compliance with them, when they were by a miraculous Providence separated and distinguished from the Idolatrous Nations, and kept forty Years in the Wilderness, to hinder them from all Communica-

[n] Seld. *of Tithes*, c. 3. [o] Plin. Hist. l. 12. c. 14.

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tion with them, and to cure them of the Proneneſs which they had to imitate them. If it be ſuppoſed, that the *Jews*, who were hated and deſpiſed, by other Nations, would be very unlikely to be imitated by them: It may be obſerved, that they were not always thus deſpiſed, nor among all Nations, but lived in good Eſteem and Friendſhip with the *Ægyptians*, 'till *a King aroſe, who knew not* Joſeph: They generally were better eſteem'd 'till the latter Ages of their Government; and then, the Reaſon of their being ill thought of, was, becauſe they were ſingular in the principal Points of Worſhip, and reſolute and zealous in the Obſervation of it, and would make no Compliances with the *Heathen* World; for they preſerv'd themſelves free from all Idolatry after their Captivity in *Babylon*. But however hated and contemned they might be; yet the ſame Authors who acquaint us with it, expreſs their own ſenſe, rather than the ſenſe of the reſt of Mankind; for at the ſame time they tell us, that they gained every-where Proſelytes. The *Greeks* were likewiſe ever deſpiſed by the *Romans*, but ever imitated; and we have now an Example of a neighbour-Nation, which is generally both imitated and ſpoken againſt. There can be no other reaſonable Account given of the Agreement of ſo many other Nations with the *Jews*, in their Rites and Cuſtoms; but that theſe Nations, in the times of *Solomon*, or ſome time after, during the flouriſhing Eſtate of the Kingdoms of *Judah* and *Iſrael*, or perhaps after the Captivity, and ſince the Diſperſion of the *Hebrews*, had conformed themſelves to them. [p] *Numenius* the *Pythagoræan* wrote, that *Jannes* (whom [q] *Pliny* calls *Jamnes*) and *Jambres*, the chief of the Magicians of *Ægypt*, by their Sorceries, withſtood *Moſes* the Leader of the *Jews*, a Man moſt powerful in his Prayers to God.

[p] Apud. Euſeb. Præpar. Evang. l. 9. c. 8.
[q] Plin. Hiſt. l. 30. c. 1.

A Tradition, of the Manner of the Passage of the *Israelites* through the *Red Sea*, was retained among the People of *Heliopolis*, related by [r] *Artapanus*. *Miracles* were sometimes wrought among the *Heathen*, by the Invocation of the God of [f] *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*; and these and other *Hebrew* Names, as *Zebaoth* and *Adonai*, were commonly used by the *Gentiles*, in their Incantations and Exorcisms, which they retained by Tradition, though they knew not the Meaning nor Original of them. The Names of *Seraphim* and *Cherubin*, of *Michael* and *Gabriel*, were also used to the like Purposes, as *Psellus* says in his Expositions of [t] *Zoroaster*'s *Oracles*. [u] *Pliny* says, the Words used on such Occasions were *foreign* and *ineffable*, and the same Character he gives of the *Punick* Tongue, which differed but little from the *Hebrew*. And [x] *Porphyry* himself produced several Oracles ascribing the true Wisdom and Knowledge of Religion to the *Hebrews*. [y] On the Gold Coast of *Guiney* there is a kind of Tryal by a bitter Water, like the Tryal of Jealousy enjoined by the Law of *Moses*, Numb. v. 17. and seems to be a Remainder of it. [z] And in the adjacent Countries, they circumcise their Children, and rest one Day in Seven; tho' without any Sense of God, or his Worship. In the Kingdom of [a] *Kachemire* are several Marks of Judaism. [b] One who relating that Circumcision, the Water of Jealousy, and other Rites, are in Use with the Inhabitants of the Gold Coast of *Guiney*, says that several *Europeans* assert, that the *Negroes* still retain many Laws and Customs which savour of *Judaism*, and acknowledges

[r] Apud. Euseb. Præpar. l. 9 c. 27.

[f] Orig. contra Cels. l. 1. & 4. Vid. Grot. ad Matth. xii. 27.

[t] Ὀνομάζα Βαρβαρα μητοι ἀλλαξῃς, Εἰσι γαρ ὀνομαζα παρ' ἑκασοις Θεοσδοζα, Δωσειν ἐν τελειαις αἰδηται εχοντα. Fr. Patric. Zoroastr. Orac. [u] Plin. Hist. l. 5. Procem. lib. 28. c. 2.

[x] Apud Euseb. Præp. Evang. l. 9. c. 10. [y] Damp. *Voyage*. Vol. 2. [z] Varen. de Divers. Gent. Relig. [a] Bern. Memoir. Tom. 4. [b] Bosman Lett. 10, 12, 18.

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that there are divers other Uſages among them, which ſeem the ſame in Effect, as well as in Name, with ſuch as occur in the Old Teſtament; declares himſelf notwithſtanding to be rather perſuaded, that they had all theſe from the *Mahometans:* When at the ſame time he takes Notice, among the reſt, of their marrying the deceaſed Brother's Wife: But where is this enjoined by the Law of *Mahomet?* Thoſe who firſt travelled into *China*, [c] found *Hebrews* there, who called themſelves *Iſraelites*, but knew not the Name of *Jews*; they were diſperſed in divers Provinces, and read the *Pentateuch* in the *Hebrew* Tongue, in their Synagogues, without Points. The People of *Bengala* retained the Name of *Adam*; and in *Madagaſcar* they [d] had the Names of *Adam*, *Eve*, and *Noah*. So that there is no Nation but has ſtill had ſome Memorials of Revealed Religion. The Obſervation of *New Moons*, Years of *Jubilee*, and *Circumciſion*, was found among the *Americans*, and *an infinite number of Ceremonies and Cuſtoms* (ſays [e] *Acoſta*) *which reſembled the ancient Law of* Moſes. They had likewiſe [f] a Tradition of *Noah*'s *Flood*. *Hornius* acknowledgeth [g] that the Name of *Joſeph* was in Uſe among the *Americans*, and that they frequently mentioned the Word *Alleluia* in their Songs, and uſed Circumciſion; and he ſhews, that in their ſeveral Languages they have many Words from the *Phœnician* or *Hebrew* Tongue. * In the Reign of *Darius Hyſtaſpes* about five hundred Years before the Incarnation of our Bleſſed Saviour, *Zoroaſter* appeared in the World, in whoſe Books are contained many Things taken out of the Old Teſtament; a great Part of the Pſalms of *David*, the Hiſtory of

[c] Trigaut. de Chriſt. Exped. apud Sinas, l. 1. c. 12.
[d] Voyage de Jean. Struys, *Tom.* 1.
[e] Joſ. Acoſta Hiſt. l. 5. c. 27. & l. 6. c. 2.
[f] Ler. Hiſt. Navig. in Braſ. c. 16. Pet. Mart. Dec. 6. c. 4.
[g] Horn. de Orig. Americ, Præf. & l. 2. c. 10. & l. 4. c. 15.
* Hyde. de Relig. Vet. Perſarum. Prideaux. Hiſt. O. *and* N. T.

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the Creation and Deluge, the Mention of *Adam* and *Eve*, of *Abraham*, *Joseph*, *Moses*, and *Solomon*. He pretended to reduce Religion to the Purity in which *Abraham* taught and practised it. The Name of *Abraham* has for many Ages been in great Veneration among all the Sects of Religion in the *East*, supposed to have its Rise from the *Israelites* in their Dispersion after their Captivity. The Book of *Zoroaster* is still extant, and had by those of his Sect yet remaining in *Persia*, in the same Veneration as the Bible is with Christians. And it has been shewn by *Clem. Alexandrinus*, by *Eusebius* and *Theodoret*, and by Modern Authors, that the Philosophers had generally some Knowledge of the Religion of the *Hebrews* (as it was particularly affirm'd by *Numenius* the Pythagoræan,) that the *Brachmans* also of *India*, were not unacquainted with it, and that the Laws of the wisest *Heathen* Nations were taken from the Laws of *Moses*. All which would have appear'd in many more and plainer Instances, if the *Greeks* had been more ingenuous and sincere; if it had not been their Custom to [h] derive the Names of Places from some Hero of their own Invention; if they had not [i] set up false Inscriptions; if [k] Plagiarism had not been a common thing among them; and if in their Histories they had not changed the Names of Persons and Places to conceal their Thefts.

III. The Oracles ascribed to the *Sibyls* are so plain and so particular, that if they should be admitted for genuine, not only the Revelations made to the *Jews*, but all the Mysteries of the *Christian Religion*, must be fully discover'd to the *Heathen:* But their Plainness has been the Cause why their Authority has been

[h] Οἱ μὲν ψευδολογεῖν τὰ πάντα ἐθελοντες, &c. Pausan. Phocic. p. 322. [i] Εἰ δὲ ἀληθὲς τὸ ἐπίγραμμα, ib. p. 355. [k] Τοῖς μὲν γὰρ πράγματι κέχρηται (Θεόπομπος) τοῖς αὐτοῖς ἑτέρωθι· ὄνομα μεταποιεῖ.—ἀ μόνον δὲ τούτῳ ὀνόματι ἀποκρύπτει τὴν κλοπὴν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τόπων μεταθέσει. Porphyrius apud Euseb. Præpar. Evang. l. 10. c. 3.

much

much question'd; which yet ought not wholly to be rejected, since the *Sibylline* Oracles were preserv'd in the Capitol, till the Reign of *Honorius*, when they were burnt by *Stilico:* and it is not to be imagined, that *Justin Martyr*, and other Christians, would cite Oracles which were in the possession of those against whom they cited them, unless they had been able to make good their Authority. This is a Subject which has exercised the Pens of many learned Men. I shall here set down what appears to me most probable upon the Question, as briefly as I can.

1. It is evident from *Virgil*, that in the Verses of the *Sibyl* of *Cuma*, the Birth of some Great Person was foretold; and from *Tully*, that this Person was to be a *King:* though both in *Tully* and *Virgil* the Prophecy be misapply'd to a wrong Person. The fourth Eclogue of *Virgil* contains the Sense of the *Sibyl*; and however it were design'd by him, is in most things much more applicable to our *Saviour*, than to the Person whom he describes.

In *Catiline*'s Conspiracy, *Lentulus* flatter'd himself with the hopes of being a King, from [l] the *Sibylline* Oracles. And from the same Oracles, as well as from the Scriptures, it is probable the Expectation of a King, who should arise out of *Judea*, which both *Suetonius* and *Tacitus* mention, [m] was spread throughout the *East*.

What *Tully* says [*lib.* 2. *de Divin.*] in disparagement of this Oracle, is not much considerable in the case; because that whole Book is written with a design to disparage all Divination in general: For being an Academic, as he professes throughout his Books of Philosophy, he acknowledg'd no more of any part of their Religion, than was just necessary to comply with the Laws, as he owns himself in divers places. However, from him it appears that a Sibylline Ora-

[l] Tull. in Catilin. Orat. 3. Sallust Bell. Catilin.
[m] Tacit. Hist. l. 5. Sueton. in Vespas. c. 4.

cle

cle was alledged to the Purpose there mentioned; and that being in Favour of *Cæsar*, and of Monarchy, if there had been no other, was Cause enough for *Tully* to reject it, and turn it to Ridicule; who, [n] when this Oracle was applied to *Ptolemy* King of *Ægypt*, had another Opinion of it.

2. Though the Verses of the *Sibyl* of *Cuma* were burnt with the Capitol, *A. U. C.* DCLXXI. yet *Virgil* expresly naming *Cuma*, this *Sibyl*'s Verses must be still remaining, or supposed to be so; unless what he writes became some Way or other known before the burning of the Capitol, and was delivered afterwards down by Tradition. *Tully* quotes *Sibylla Erythræa*, [*lib.* 1. *de Divin.*] and if he mean the same *Sibyl* in the 2d Book, *Martianus Capella* says, [o] that *Sibylla Erythræa* and *Cumana* were the same. And in the Search which was made for the Sibylline Oracles in *Italy*, and in all other Places where there was any Probability of finding any Remains of them, after the Burning of the Capitol, it is likely her Verses might be recovered. For [p] *Valerius Maximus* says, that *M. Tullius* (as he calls him, not *Attilius*) was put to Death by *Tarquinius*, for suffering *Petronius Sabinus* to transcribe the *Sibyl*'s Verses; and whether they were dispersed in divers Copies before it were discovered, so as not to be suppressed, it is not known. [q] *Augustus* caused a diligent Search to be made for the *Sibylline* Verses, in all Places where they were supposed to be preserved, and those which were judged to be genuine, he ordered to be kept with great Care. This was about eleven Years before the Birth of Christ; and from hence *Virgil* seems to have contrived his Poem. But if they were the Verses of some other Sibyl, which went under the Name of the Sibyl of *Cuma*, after hers were

[n] Quemadmodum homines Religiosi Sibyllæ placere dixerunt. Cic. Epist. ad Famil. L. 1. Ep. 7.

[o] Martian. Capel. Nupt. Philolog. l. 2. [p] Val. Max. l. 1. c. 1. [q] Tacit. Annal. l. 6. Sueton. Aug. c. 31.

burnt

burnt with the Capitol, it is not much material; however, the *Romans* certainly thought they had the Oracles of the *Cuman* Sibyl: For, as *Lactantius* says, [r] they allowed the Verses of all the other Sibyls to be copied out and published, though they would not suffer those of *Cuma* to be read, but by Order of the Senate.

Notwithstanding all this Care, they could not keep them concealed; for we meet them often quoted by *Heathen* Authors. Indeed, the Oracles in the Capitol [s] were only Copies taken from Originals which were left in those Places, from whence the *Romans* had their own Copies transcribed; and the Originals might be read, and other Copies taken, how carefully soever the *Romans* kept their own.

3. It being known that the Sibylline Oracles contained Things which concerned the Kingdom of the *Messias*, and the Verses themselves being in divers Hands, this gave Occasion to some to make many more Verses, under the Name of the *Sibyls*, relating the whole History of our Saviour, *&c.* But if the Sibyls Verses had been all burnt or lost, or if they had been kept so close, that no Body could possibly come to the Knowledge of them, without Leave from the Senate, there could have been no Pretence for any Imposture, nor would the Christians ever have alledged them as genuine. *Celsus* objects only, [t] That many Things were added to the Verses of the Sibyls. Not that they were all Counterfeit, or that the Christians had no Means of coming by the True: Which was an Advantage that an Adversary much less subtle than *Celsus* would not have omitted, if there had been any Ground for it. *Origen* replies, That it was a malicious Accusation, and that he was able to bring no Proof of it, by producing ancient Copies more genuine than those which the Christians made Use of. [u] *Blondel* argues

[r] Lactant. de falsâ Relig. c. 6. & Epit. c. 5.
[s] Dionys. Halicarn. l. 4. Fenestella apud Lactant. *ibid.*
[t] Origen. contra Cels. l. 7. [u] Lib. 1. cap. 18.

very

very well, that it had been the greatest Rashness and Imprudence imaginable, and most destructive of the Design at which they aim'd, the Establishment of Christianity, for the Fathers to cite Books, which the *Heathen* were sure could never come to their Knowledge, and which those, to whom they cited them, knew to contain no such things as they pretended to produce from them. "When this, *says* "*he*, is as impudent and senseless, as if some *Jew*, from "Writings lately forged, full of Criminal Accusati- "ons against the Saviour of the World should "maintain to the very Faces of Christians, that he "found them in the New Testament, that the A- "postles were the Authors of them, and that the "Church having always had them in her Custody, "had concealed them." He says, "That this and "much more to the same purpose, any Man of com- "mon Reason might easily perceive, and that *Justin* "*Martyr* would have observ'd it; if he had consider'd "things with more Calmness." But what is there in all the Writings of *Justin Martyr*, that discovers his Want of Calmness, or rather, that does not shew him to have been considerate, learn'd and prudent? He [x] is effectually vindicated from the Mistake, with which he has been charged, concerning the Statue erected at *Rome*, of *Simon Magus:* and a [y] probable Account has been given, that not by his, but by some Transcriber's Mistake, *Herod* is made contemporary with *Ptolemæus Philadelphus*. However, every candid Reader must acknowledge, as well that *Justin Martyr* could not be so far ignorant of the Age when *Herod* liv'd, as that it was impossible for so obvious Inconveniencies, as *Blondel* mentions, to escape the Observation of *Justin* or any of the Fathers, or almost of any other Man. If *Justin Martyr* were void of all

[x] Tillemont. Memoir. Eccl. Tom. 2. Part. 1. p. 340.
[y] Grabe not. in Apol. 1.

Sense

Sense and Modesty, would the rest have pursued the same Course of Folly, only to make themselves ridiculous and odious by his Example: They were neither impudent nor stupid Men, and that which could proceed from nothing, but a mixture of Impudence and Stupidity, can with no Reason or Justice be charged upon them; and therefore they must be allow'd to have cited the genuine Verses of the Sibyls.

And if the Sibyls had delivered nothing relating to these Matters, why should any one counterfeit Verses in their Name, rather than under the Title of any other Oracle? There must be some Ground and Foundation of Truth, to give any Opportunity or Pretence to the counterfeiting of it: And the Prophecies of the Sibyls concerning *Christ*, must be the Occasion of all the additional Prophecies which were falsly ascrib'd to them.

4. *Isaac Vossius* thought that great part of these Oracles were compos'd by the *Jews*. And indeed, *Pausanias* says, [z] one of the Sibyls was by the *Jews* called *Sabba*; the same, I suppose, who is mentioned by * *Ælian*; and by *Suidas*, said to be descended from *Noah*, and named *Sambethe*, called the *Chaldæan*, and by some the *Hebrew*; and also the *Persian Sibyl*; whom † *Alexander ab Alexandro* calls *Sibylla Judæa*; though ‡ *Josephus* citing a Sibyl concerning the Tower of *Babel*, gives no such Account of her, but rather supposes the contrary. Which Passage is likewise cited by [a] *Theophilus Antiochenus*, and is still extant in the *Sibylline* Books.

But if these were only Heathen Oracles, yet there is reason to believe that the Predictions concerning *Christ* were very plain, though not so particular as those now set down in the Sibylline Books; both because the *Heathen* having but few Oracles of this na-

[z] Pausan. in Phocic. p. 328.
† Alexand. ab Alex. l. 3. c. 16.
[a] Ad Autolyc. lib. 2. Sibyl. lib. 3.
* Ælian. l. 12. c. 35.
‡ Joseph. Antiq. l. 1. c. 5.

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ture, and so many of a quite contrary Nature, it was the more necessary that these should be plain; and because we find, that when God, in his infinite Wisdom, saw it fitting to reveal himself to others, he did it in as plain a Manner, and sometimes in a plainer, than he did to his own People in any one Prophecy.

Thus *Balaam*'s Prophecy is as plain as any Prophecy of that Time at least; and our Saviour discovered himself more plainly to the Woman of *Samaria*, than he had yet done to any of his Disciples, *John* iv. 26. Not to mention the Dreams of *Pharaoh* and *Nebuchadnezzar*, or the Message of *Jonah* to the *Ninevites*. And as *Balaam*, an Inchanter or Sorcerer, delivered a true and famous Prophecy of *Christ*, and the Devils were forced to confess him to be the *Son of God*; so it is reasonable to believe, that God might ordain, that these celebrated Propheteſſes, whose Oracles were otherwise the Devil's Instruments to promote his Ends, should foretel our *Saviour*'s Coming: And yet St. *Augustine* assures us, [b] that the *Sibylla Erythræa*, or *Cumana*, had nothing of Idolatry in her Verses; but spoke so much against it, that he believed her to belong to *the City of God*.

5. The Difference which there is between *Virgil*'s Fourth *Eclogue*, and the Translation of it into *Greek*, in *Constantine*'s *Oration*, is rather an Argument *for* the Authority of the *Sibylline Oracles*, than against it. For [c] *Constantine* was wont to compose his *Orations* and *Epistles* in *Latin*, and they were translated into *Greek* by some whom he employed in that Service: And the Author of the Translation translated only what was properly *Virgil*'s; but when he came to what was by *Virgil* borrowed from the *Sibyl*, he wrote down the Original *Greek*, nor translating the Variations which *Virgil* had made from it, to apply the Prophecy to his own Subject.

[b] August. Civ. Dei. l. 18. c. 23. [c] Euseb. Vit. Const. l. 3. c. 13.

It

It is well known, that the Ancients took as great a Liberty as this in their Translations, and it was the more allowable, when there could be no Design or Likelihood of Deceit in the Translation of so famous a Poem as that *Eclogue* of *Virgil*. This was but to point out the Alterations which *Virgil* had made, and to shew how easily these Parts of his Poem might be supplied from the Original *Greek*: And perhaps this was a known Translation of that *Eclogue* which had been made with this Design.

It were no difficult Matter, to Answer all the other Objections which are wont to be brought against the *Sibylline Oracles*, so far as the Notion here proposed is concerned in them. For though the Books which we have now, contain manifest Falsifications and Forgeries; yet there must have been something real, to give a Pretence and Countenance to so many elaborate Forgeries of this Nature, and that was the *Sibylline Oracles* mentioned in *Tully*, *Sallust*, *Virgil*, &c. We may therefore conclude, that the True Religion received a considerable Promulgation from these Oracles, which served to awaken in the *Gentiles* an Expectation of a *King* to be born in *Judæa*.

As soon as the Gospel appeared in the World, like the Rising Sun, it diffused its Divine Light and Influence into all Parts of the Earth; its Propagation was it self a Miracle, and answerable to that miraculous Power of Languages, and other Means by which it was accomplished. *Tertullian* acquaints us, [d] that it was soon propagated beyond the Bounds of the *Roman* Empire; he speaks of the Northern Parts of *Britain*. One, who was most capable of knowing, St. *Clement*, his Fellow-labourer, acquaints us, [e] that

[d] Tertul. adv. Judæos, c. 7.

[e] Κηρυξ γενομενος εν τε τη ανατολη, και εν τη δυσει, —— και επι το τερμα της δυσεως ελθων. Clem. Rom. Ep. 1. c. 5.

St. *Paul* went as far as the *West*, according to the Geography of those Times, extended. Which shews, that he accomplish'd his Intention (*Rom.* xv. 24, 28.) of going to *Spain*. And it is probably suppos'd, that he landed in *Britain*, and made some stay here in his Passage. And we know it receiv'd as early a Propagation in other Places more remote, being preached by St. *Bartholomew* [f] to the *Indians*, by St. *Thomas* to the *Parthians*, and to the *Scythians* by St. *Andrew*. [g] St. *Thomas* preached likewise to the *Indians*, and St. *Matthew* to the *Persians*. In [h] general we are told, that the Apostles preached to the *Persians*, *Armenians*, *Parthians*, *Scythians*, *Indians*, and *Britans*, to [i] the *Indians*, *Ægyptians*, and *Æthiopians*, that they preached [k] not only to all under the *Roman* Empire, but to the *Scythians*, the *Sarmatians*, the *Indians*, the *Æthiopians*, the *Persians*, the *Seres*, *(Chineses)* the *Hyrcanians*, the *Bactrians*, the *Britans*, the *Cimbri*, the *Germans*, and in short to all Nations. The Eunuch Treasurer to *Candace* Queen of *Æthiopia*, being converted and baptized by St. *Philip*, returned and preached the Gospel there: whereby [l] St. *Cyril* of *Jerusalem* observes, that Prophecy of the *Psalmist* was fulfilled, Æthiopia *shall soon stretch out her hands unto God*, Psal. lxviii. 31.

In St. *Augustin*'s time, [m] the *Christians* were more numerous in all the known Parts of the World, than the *Jews* and *Heathens* together. [n] *Theodoret* says, that but very few Gentiles, *Three* or *Four*, in comparison, continued in their Infidelity, and that they valued themselves upon being singular, and not led away with the Multitude: And we have reason to believe, that the Zeal of the Apostles, and their immediate

[f] Euseb. Hist. l. 3. c. 1. & l. 5. c. 10. Socr. l. 1. c. 19.
[g] Ambros. in Psal. xlv. [h] Euseb. Dem. Evang. l. 3. c. 7.
[i] Theodoret. Tom. 1. in Psal. cxvi. [k] Id. Tom. 4. Serm. 9.
[l] Catech. 17. [m] St. Aug. de Utilit. Credendi, c. 7.
[n] Theodoret. in Psal. lxv. 7.

Disciples

Disciples and Followers, had carried the glad Tidings of the Gospel farther, than either Ambition or Avarice it self; 'till of late Years, had made any Discovery; which *Tertullian* likewise sufficiently intimates. [c] *Le Compte* thinks, that St. *Thomas* in Person, or by his Followers, propagated the Gospel in *China*, because the *Indians* had then great Dealings with the *Chineses*, to whom, he says, almost all *India* was Tributary. And the Christian Religion, which had anciently been preached throughout the *East*, received an additional Propagation under *Tamerlane*, in the beginning of the Fifteenth Century. For that mighty Prince, who conquered the *Muscovites*, brought *China* under his Power, and by his Victories over the *Turks*, established the *Greek* Emperor in his Dominions, and subdued *Ægypt*, had with him many *Christians* skilful in several Arts and Sciences, whom he brought from all Places where he had been with his Armies, or who had been recommended to him. *Axalla* a *Genoese*, who had been bred up with him, was a *Christian*, and in great Favour and Authority under him. The *Christians* were his best and chiefest Soldiers, upon whom he most relied; he reposed as much Trust and Confidence in them, as in his Natural Subjects, and more than in the most zealous *Mahometans*. He gave out Orders all over his vast Empire, that *Christians* should have the free Exercise of their Religion, and that Christ should be honoured and reverenced by all Men; and the *Christian* Worship was daily performed in his Army. This Emperor had in his Dominions many Countries, where the Inhabitants were all *Christians*, and he commanded that the *Christians* should be every where used with as much respect and esteem, as those of the *Mahometan* Religion. All which is [p] related in

[c] Le Coupte's *Memoirs*, p. 346.

[p] *Hist. of* Tamerl. *by* Sanctyon. c. 2, 7.

the most authentick Account that has been published of the Life of this great Emperor.

The *Cross* was found to be in Use among the *Chinese*, by those who first went from *Europe* [q] into *China*; and a *Bell* was seen there, which had *Greek* Characters engraven on it: And those who honoured the *Cross* were in so great Numbers in the Northern Provinces, that they gave Jealousy to the *Infidels*. The *Christians* there were called *Isai*, from the Name *Jesus*: And from the *Chaldee* Books which were found upon the Coasts of *Malabar*, it appears that St. *Thomas* preached the Gospel in *China*, and founded many Churches there. The Passages which prove this, may be seen in *Trigautius* and *Semedo*, translated out of those Books. *Nicolas de Conti* [r] saith of the *Chinese*, that when they rise in the Morning, they turn their Faces to the *East*, and with their Hands joined, say, *God in Trinity keep us in this Law.*

The Gospel was preached in *China*, [s] by some who came from *Judæa*, and seem to have been Monks, *A. D.* DCXXXVI, as it appears by a Marble Table erected *A. D.* DCCLXXXII, and found *A. D.* MDCXXV. This Monument contains the principal Articles of the Christian Faith, written both in *Syriack* and in *Chinese* Characters; the Substance of the Inscription may be seen in *Le Compte*'s *Memoirs*, and the whole is translated by *Semedo*. *Hornius* [t] indeed rejects this Inscription (which was likewise produced by *Kircher*) as counterfeit; but without any Cause, that I can perceive: For if it were a Fraud, there is no reason to think that we should not find all the Points of Popery inserted in it. *Andreas Mullerus*, in his *Opuscula Orientalia*, has set down the Original, with a New Translation and a Paraphrase and Comment

[q] Trigaut. de Christ. Expedit. apud Sinas, l. 1. c. 11. Alvar. Semedo Hist. of *China*, Part. 1. c. 31. [r] Purch. Part. 1. l. 4. c. 16. [s] Le Compte's *Memoirs*, p. 348. Semedo ib.
[t] Horn. de Orig. American. T. 4. c. 15.

upon

upon it, wherein he examines what *Kircher* had observed from this Inscription in Favour of the Romish Doctrines.

Osorius writes, [u] that the *Brachmans* believed a *Trinity* in the Divine Nature, and a God Incarnate to procure the Salvation of Mankind; and that the Church of St. *Thomas* was esteemed most Holy among the *Saracens*, and other Nations, for the Report of *Miracles* wrought there.

The *Gentiles* of *Indostan* [x] retain some Notion of the *Trinity*, and of the *Incarnation* of the *Second Person*, though corrupted with fabulous Stories.

The People of *Ceylon* [y] do firmly believe the *Resurrection of the Body*. The [z] *Talapoins* of *Siam* have their Convents and Chaplets, and there are generally both [a] Monks and Nuns among the Gentiles of the *East-Indies*. As the Fabulous Deities of other *Heathen* Nations were framed upon corrupt and absurd Allusions to several Historical Truths in the Old Testament; so the *Siamses* seem to have contrived their Religion by a profane Mixture of the Mysteries of Christianity with their own impious Fancies: For they [b] report of *Thevetat*, that he was the Author of a Schism in Religion, and that for his Enmity to his Brother *Sommonacodom*, he is punished in Hell, by being hung upon a Cross, with Nails pierced through his Hands and Feet, and his Head crowned with Thorns. And this is made a great Objection by their Priests against our Religion, that the *Christians* are the Disciples of *Thevetat*. [c] Their God *Sommonacodom* is said to have been born of a Virgin, and his

[u] Hieron. Osor. de Rebus Eman. Lusitan. Regis, l. 2.
[x] *Continuat. of Bernier's Memoirs.* Tom. 3.
[y] *Capt.* Knox's *Hist. of* Ceylon, Part. 3. c. 5.
[z] Loubere de Royaume de Siam. Tom. 1. Part. 3. c. 17. Voyage de Siam. des Peres Jes. Vol. 1. l. 6.
[a] Theven. *Trav. Part.* 3. c. 36. Bernier. *Memoir.* Tom. 3.
[b] Voyage de Siam. *ib.* [c] *Ib.* l. 5.

[d] Mother's Name in the Book written in the *Balie* Tongue, which contains the Mysteries of their Religion, is *Maha Maria*, which signifies the *Great Mary:* tho' it is as often written *Mania* or *Maria*; and these Books do likewise relate, that his Father was King of *Ceylon*. This Inconsistency shews, that they have mixt the *Christian* Mysteries with Fables and Traditions of their own.

The *Indians* in *America* [e] worshipped a God, who, they said, was *One in Three and Three in One*. They baptized [f] their Children, and used the Cross in Baptism, having a great Veneration for the Cross, and thinking it a Preservative against Evil Spirits; they believed the [g] Resurrection of the Body; they had Monasteries, Nunneries, Confessors and Sacraments; And the *Mexicans*, [h] in their ancient Tongue, called their High-Priests *Papa*'s, or Sovereign Bishops, as it appears by their Histories.

It is a remarkable Relation which *Lerius* gives [i] of the People of *Brasil*, That when he had discoursed to them concerning Religion, and endeavoured to persuade them to become Christians; one of their ancient Men answered, That he had declared excellent and wonderful Things to them, which put him in mind of what they had often heard from their Fore-fathers; That a long while ago, many Ages before their time, there came a Stranger into their Country, in such a Habit, and with a Beard, as they saw the *French* wear, (for these *Americans* have none) who preached to them in the same manner, and to the same effect, as they had now heard him do; but that the People would not hearken to him. Upon which *Lerius* observes, that *Nicephorus* writes, That St. *Matthew* preached the Gospel to *Cannibals*; and

[d] Loubere, *ib.* c. 24. [e] Jos. Acost. Hist. l. 5. c. 28.
[f] Pet. Mart. Decad. 4. c. 8. & Decad. 8. c. 9.
[g] Lerii Navigat. in Bras. c. 16. [h] Acost. l. 5. c. 14, 23, 24, 25. [i] Lerius Navigat. ib.

he-

he thinks it not improbable, that some of the Apostles might pass into *America*, that *the Sound* of the Gospel might *go into all the Earth*. And it is observable, that he found many Words in the *Brasilian* Language taken out of the *Greek* Tongue.

Hornius[k] owns, as every Man else must do, that considers it, that there are manifest Tokens of the Rites aad Doctrines both of the *Jewish* and *Christian* Religion among the *Americans*, as of *Circumcision*, *Baptism*, the *Trinity*, the *Lord's Supper*, &c. but then he is for bringing the *Jews* and *Christians* thither his own way, and will have the *Jews* come in company of the *Scythians*; and the *Christian* Rites to be brought in with the *Turks* and *Tartars*, or from *Japan* and *China:* Though he likewise approves and confirms the Relation which *Powel* and *Hackluyt* give of a Colony transplanted into *America*, by *Madoc*, from *Wales*.

Several Usages which are observed to be among the Natives, by the Missionaries, both in the *East* and *West-Indies*, and to have a near Resemblance to their own Rites, seem to prove that there have formerly been *Christian* Monks amongst them, rather than that this proceeds (as the Missionaries imagined) from an Ambition that the Devil has to Ape, as they say, what is done in God's Service; or that we may conclude, as some *Protestants* have done a little too hastily, that this itself is a sufficient Argument, that the Devil is the Author of such Rites, because they are found amongst his Worshippers. If we consider the vast numbers of Monks, in ancient Times, in the Eastern Parts of the World, who were Men of an active and indefatigable Zeal, it may well be supposed, that some of them might find the way into those Countries which have been but lately discovered to the rest of the World.

[k] Horn. de Orig. Americ. l. 3. c. 2. & l. 4. c. 15.

It is evident from the unanimous Testimony both of *Protestants* and *Papists*, that there are manifest Tokens, in all Parts of the World, that the Christian Religion has been preached amongst them. And it must, in common Justice, be confessed, that the latter Missionaries have preached the Gospel among the *Indians* with great Zeal and Success. A King of *Ceylon* [l] received Baptism, and was very zealous to bring over his Subjects to the Christian Faith; and one of their most learned Men became a Christian at the same Time; but the King was deposed by his Idolatrous Subjects. Some of the Kings of *Congo* [m] have been converted: One [n] of whom, *Alphonso*, destroyed all the Idols, and propagated the Christian Faith with great Zeal: He sent his Sons, Grandsons and Nephews to *Portugal* to study; Two of them were afterwards Bishops in their own Country. The King of *Monomotapa* [o] reigning *A. D.* MDCXXXI, was a Christian. [p] *Bernier* computes the Number of Christians in the Kingdom of *Bengale*, at between Thirty and Forty Thousand. And in *Japan* [q] *A. D.* MDCXIII, there were Four hundred Thousand Christians, who were all destroyed [r] by the Persecution raised, through the Covetousness of some *Dutch* Merchants, and their malicious Plots and Contrivances, to engross the Trade of those Islands to themselves. And indeed, by the Accounts which we have of those Parts, the Lives of the *Europeans* have been so scandalous, and so contrary to their Religion, that besides the Guilt of the Sins themselves, they have a great deal to answer, for that that Hindrance which they have thereby given to the Progress of Christianity among those poor People,

[l] Tavern. Voyages des Indes, l. 3. c. 4.
[m] Varen. de diversis Gent. Relig. Tavern. Voyage de Perse, c. 14. & Osor. de rebus Eman. l. 3, 8, 10.
[n] Faria's Portug. Asia. Tom. 1. *Part.* 1. c. 3.
[o] Tavern. ibid. [p] Memoir. Tom. 4. [q] Ibid.
[r] Varen. de Relig. in Regno Japon. c. 11.

who

who have generally shewn a good Inclination and Forwardness to be instructed; and in Times of Persecution, both from *Mahometans* and *Idolaters*, even Children have born all Sorts of Torments [f] with wonderful Courage and Patience.

Several Kings of *Japan* [t] have been converted. And in *China*, many of their principal *Mandarines*, or Governors, have been eminent for their Zeal in the Christian Religion; and though the *Chineses* are naturally very timorous and cowardly, yet in all Times of Persecution, they have been observed to continue firm and stedfast in the Faith. We are told, that the Mother, the Wife, and the Eldest Son of the Emperor of *China*, were formerly converted, and that there is lately an Edict published in Favour of the Christian Religion in *China*, that a Prince of the Blood is become a Christian, and that the Emperor himself has caused a Church to be erected in his Palace, and lodges the Missionaries near his own Person. And in the *West-Indies*, *Cortes* wrote to the Emperor, That the People of *Mechoachan* [u] sent to him for an Account of his Religion, being weary of their own, for its cruel and bloody Rites.

It is observable, That *Christianity* has been still professed in those Parts of the World where there has been most Learning and Commerce; where they have been most able, and have had most Opportunities to instruct other Nations. To which end, the vast Extent first of the *Greek*, and *Latin*, and *Syriack*, and since of the *Persick*, and *Sclavonian*, and *Arabick* Tongues, has been very advantagious; the Scriptures of the New Testament being written in the first, and translated into all the rest. And though, by the Just

[f] Maffei Hist. Ind lib. 16.

[t] Varen. de Japan. c. 6. Semed. *Hist. of* China, part. 2. Bell. Tartar. Le Compte, p. 480.

[u] Jos. Acost. l. 5. c. 22.

and

and Wise Providence of God, *Mahometans* and *Idolaters* have been suffered to possess themselves of those Places in *Greece*, *Asia*, and *Africa*, where the *Christian Religion* formerly most flourished; yet there are still such Remainders of the *Christian Religion* amongst them, as to give them Opportunity to be converted; and when their Sins shall not hinder, to restore the Gospel to those Countries, as before. For, by Mr. *Berewood*'s Account, [w] in the Dominions of the *Turk* in *Europe*, the *Christians* make two third parts at least of the Inhabitants; and in *Constantinople* it self, he reckons above Twenty *Christian* Churches, and above Thirty in *Thessalonica*, where the *Mahometans* have (or had) but Three Mosques. * The *Greeks* have twenty six Churches within the Walls of *Constantinople*, beside six in *Galata*, and as many of the *Western Christians* of the *Roman* Communion. [x] *Philadelphia*, now called *Ala-shahir*, has no fewer than twelve *Christian* Churches. [y] The whole Island of *Chio* is govern'd by *Christians*; there are above thirty *Latin* Churches, and more than five hundred *Greek*. And in some other Islands of the *Archipelago* there are none but *Christians*. Which, by [z] Sir *Paul Ricaut*'s Account of the present State of the *Ottoman* Empire, has not been without very considerable Effect: For a Sect among the *Turks*, call'd *Haietti*, hold that *Christ* is Eternal, that he was Incarnate, and that he shall come to judge the World at the Last Day. The Students in the *Grand Scignior*'s Court generally maintain, that *Christ* is *God*, and the *Redeemer of the World*; and this is a common Tenet in *Constantinople*; the Professors of it are styled *Chupmessabi*; or

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[w] Brerewood's *Enquir.* c. 10.

* *Dr.* Smith. Hist. Observ. *of C. P.* Misc. Curios. Vol. 3. p. 35, 37. [x] Ricaut's *Present State of the* Greek *Church*. p. 74.

[y] Thev. *Trav.* Pt. 1 c. 61, 65, 69.

[z] Ricaut's *Hist. of the* Ottoman *Empire*, l. 2. c. 11, 12.

the

the good Followers of the Messiah, and some have suffered Martyrdom in maintainance of this Doctrine. And the *Turkish* Soldiers, in the Confines of *Hungary* and *Bosnia*, read the Gospel in the *Sclavonian* Tongue. [a] *Bernier* writes, that in *Mogul*, though the Missionaries make some Progress among the *Gentiles*, yet they do not in ten Years make one *Christian* of a *Mahometan:* But he says, that the Great Mogul, *Jehan Guire*, Grandfather of *Aureng-Zebe*, consented that Two of his Nephews should be *Christians*; and declares, that the *Mahometans* have venerable Thoughts of our Religion; that they never speak of *Christ*, but with great Reverence; that they never pronounce the Word *Aysa*, i. e. *Jesus*, without adding that of *Azaret*, which signifies *Majesty*; that they agree with us, that he was miraculously born of a Virgin-Mother, and that he is the *Kelum-Allah*, and the *Rough-Allah*, the Word of God, and the Spirit of God. All which is no more than the *Alcoran* teaches them, nor than the *Mahometans* of *Persia* and *Morocco* profess to believe. [b] The *Persian Mahometants* receive among their sacred Books, the *Pentateuch*, the *Psalms*, all the Books of the Prophets, and the Four Evangelists: And the Reading these Books of Scripture, has been the means which God has been pleased to make use of for the Conversion of many Persons of great Eminency. In the Kingdom of *Morocco*, they receive the Books of *Moses*, the *Psalms*, and the *four Gospels*, and observe the Festival of St. *John*; [c] tho' in the Gospels they follow the false Glosses of *Sergius* and the *Alcoran*. [d] Sir *Thomas Roe* observes, that the *Great Mogul*, *Erbar Sha*, gave the Missionaries all manner of Encouragement and Assistance, with full Liberty to all sorts of his Subjects to become *Christians*, even to *his own Court and Blood*; and that

[a] Memoir. Tom. 3. [b] Sanson. Royaume de Perse.
[c] Relation de l'Empire de Maroc. par Mr. de S. Olon.
[d] *Lett. Octob.* 30. 1616,

neither

neither *Jehan Guire*, to whom he was sent Embassador, nor any of all the Sects in his Kingdom, uttered any disrespectful Words of *Christ*, as they did not forbear to do of *Mahomet*; *which*, says he, *is a wonderful secret working of God's Truth, and worth observing.* It is also observed lately by a [e] learned Author, that the *Christians* had better Terms from *Mahomet* himself, than any other of his Tributaries; and that there is no *Mahometan* Country where the *Christian Religion* is not esteemed the best, next their own; and the Professors of it accordingly respected by them, before any other Sort of Men that differ from them.

In *Africa*, besides the Christians living in *Ægypt*, and in the Kingdom of *Congo* and *Angola*, the Islands upon the Western Coasts are inhabited by Christians; and the vast Kingdom of *Habassia*, or *Abassinia*, supposed to be as big as *Germany*, *France*, *Spain*, and *Italy*, taken together (according to Mr. *Brerewood*'s Computation) is possessed by Christians. And 'till less than Two hundred Years ago, *Nubia*, a Country of a great Extent, lying between the *Æquator* and the *Northern Tropick*, continued, as it's believed, from the Apostles Times, in the Christian Religion. In *Asia*, he says, most part of the Empire of *Russia*, the Countries of *Circassia* and *Mengrelia*, *Georgia*, and Mount *Libanus*, are inhabited only by Christians, besides the Dispersion of them into other Parts, under the Denomination of *Nestorians*, *Jacobites*, *Marionites*, and *Armenians*, the last of which are a People exceedingly addicted to Traffick [f], and have great Privileges granted them by the *Turks*, and other *Mahometans*; they are found in Multitudes in most Cities of great Trade, and are more dispersed than any other Nation but the *Jews*. [g] Their Patriarch of *Mosul*, or *Babylon*, is said to have had more than a Thousand Bishops under

[e] *Dr.* Prideaux's *Life of* Mahomet. [f] Brerewood's *Enquir.* c. 24. [g] Otto Frisingensis Chron. l. 7. c. 31. vid. Morin. de Syr. Nestorianorum Ordinat.

him,

him, and is therefore styled *Catholicus*, or Universal Bishop. The *Jacobites* are reported to be dispers'd into Forty Kingdoms. In the Promontory extending itself into the *Indian Sea*, are the *Christians of Saint Thomas:* So call'd, because first converted by him, who is believ'd to lie buried at *Maliapour*, and they have continued in the Christian Religion from his Time. It must be confess'd, that in *Mengrelia*, and other Countries, the Doctrines of Religion are much corrupted, and their Practice very different from the Profession of Christians; but however, they retain the Gospel among them; and it is every Man's own Fault, if he make not a good Use of those Means of Salvation, which God in his Providence has afforded him. Of late, the *New Testament*, in the *Malayan* Tongue, which is so famous throughout the *East*, and *Grotius*'s excellent Book *of the Truth of the Christian Religion*, in *Arabick*, have been Translated and Printed at the Charge of the Honourable Mr. *Boyle*; and the first dispers'd over all the *East-Indies* where the *Malayan* Language is used; and the latter, into all the Countries were *Arabick* is spoken. He also contributed to the Impression of the *New Testament* and *Catechism*, which was made by the *Turkish* Company, in the Language of the *Turks*. The *New Testament* was Printed in the *Malayan* Tongue, by Order of the *Dutch East-India* Company, in *Latin* Characters, *A. D.* 1668. And a [h] Translation of the *Four Evangelists*, and the *Acts of the Apostles*, and the *Psalms*, into that Tongue, has been Printed by the *Dutch*, in *Malayan* Characters, who have likewise appointed a Sermon to be preach'd once a Week at least, in their Colonies; and the Church built for this Use in *Batavia* is call'd the *Malayan* Church. [i] The *New Testament* was long ago Printed in the *Japonese* Tongue. [k] And *Grotius*'s

[h] William Mainston's Malayan *Grammar*, MS.
[i] Purch. *Pilgr.* Pt. 1. l. 4. c. 1.
[k] Grot. ad Voss. Epist. libro de Satisfact. præfix.

Book

Book of the *Christian Religion* had been translated into the *Greek* and *Persian* Tongues, in his Life-time. The *Gospels*, and the *Acts of the Apostles*, translated into the *Malayan* Tongue, were reprinted at Mr. *Boyle*'s Charge at *Oxford*, MDCLXXVII. In *America*, it is notorious, that the Christians are sufficiently numerous; and have sufficient Opportunities to instruct the Natives, if they were but as careful to improve them to so good an End, rather than in pursuit of their own Gain. The whole *Bible translated into the* Indian *Language*, *was ordered to be printed, by the Commissioners of the United Colonies in* New-England. *And at the Charge, and with the Consent of the Corporation in* England *for the Propagation of the Gospel amongst the* Indians *in* New-England, was printed at *Cambridge*, *A. D.* MDCLXIII, and dedicated to King *Charles* II. by the Commissioners of the United Colonies. The Proceedings and Success of the *Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in foreign Parts*, which was incorporated *A. D.* MDCCI, are to be seen in the Books published by order of that Society.

The Sum of all is this: Before the *Flood*, *Revelations* were so frequent, and the Lives of Men so long, that no Man could be ignorant of the Creation, and of the Providence of God in the Government of the World, and the Duties requir'd towards him. And in the first Ages after the Flood, God's Will revealed to *Noah*, and the Precepts given to him at his coming out of the Ark, must be well known to all the surviving World; and as soon as the Remembrance of them began to decay, and Men to fall into Idolatry, *Abraham* and the other Patriarchs, were sent into divers Countries, to proclaim God's Commandments, and to testifie against the Impiety of Idolaters, whereever they came. For, to publish the Reveal'd Will of God, and make it generally known in the World, God was pleas'd to chuse to himself a peculiar People, and to send them first out of *Mesopotamia* into *Canaan*, and,

and, upon occasion, back again into *Mesopotamia*; and then several times into *Ægypt*; and from thence, after they had dwelt there some Hundreds of Years, into *Canaan* again; at what time he appointed them Laws, admirably fitted and contriv'd for the receiving of *Strangers* and *Proselytes*. After many signal Victories, and after other Captivities, they were carry'd away Captive to *Babylon*, and were still deliver'd and restor'd by a wonderful and miraculous Providence, and had vast numbers of Proselytes in all parts of the known World, and many Footsteps and Remainders of the true Religion are found in the remotest Parts of the Earth. And when, by the just Judgment of God upon the *Jews*, for their Sin in rejecting the *Messias*, they were rejected by him, from being his People, they were dispers'd throughout the World, for a Testimony to all Nations, that *Moses* and the Prophets deliver'd no other thing than what God had reveal'd to them; since they continue to maintain and assert those very Books, which plainly foretel all that Ruin and Destruction that has befallen them for their Infidelity and Disobedience; and still remain a distinct Nation, according to an express Prophecy, (*Jer.* xxxi. 36.) notwithstanding their many Dispersions for so many Ages. They are a standing Evidence, in all Parts of the World, of the Truth of the *Christian Religion*, bearing that Curse which their Fore-fathers so many Ages ago imprecated upon themselves and their Posterity, when they caus'd *Christ* to be crucified. And the Gospel has, by its own Power and Evidence, manifested it self to all People dispers'd over the face of the whole Earth. To which might be added, That the *Mahometans* owning so much of the Religion Reveal'd both in the Old and New Testament, afford some kind of Testimony to the Truth of it, in those vast Dominions of which they are possess'd. All the most remarkable Dispensations of Providence, in the several Changes in the World, have had a particular

cular Influence in the Propagation of the True Religion. *Cyrus*, *Alexander the Great*, divers of the *Roman* Emperors, and of latter Times, *Tamerlane*, and several other Princes, were great Favourers of it; and the worst of Men, and the most unlikely Accidents, have contributed towards the Promotion of it.

If it be objected, *That notwithstanding all which has been said, great part of the World are Unbelievers.* Let it be considered,

1. That there is no Nation but has great Opportunities of being Converted; and it is evident, from what has been produc'd concerning the *Chinese* and the *Americans* themselves, that the Christian Religion had been preach'd among them; tho' the Knowledge of it was lost, through their own Fault, before the late Discoveries of those Parts of the World. And as *Christ* came into the World *in the fulness of time*; so, *in the fulness of time*, that is, at the most fitting Season, he reveal'd himself to the several Nations of it. God, who is infinitely gracious to all, and knows the Hearts and Dispositions of all Men, might defer the Restoring his Gospel to the *Chinese*, for instance, 'till that very Time when he saw them best prepared for it: And it is remarkable, That the Discovery of the *Indies* happened about the Time of the Reformation; that those poor People might have the Purity, as well as the Truth of Religion, if Christians had been as little wanting to them in their Charity, as God has been in the Disposals of his Providence. He stays 'till they have *filled up the measure of their iniquities*, before he *punishes* a People: And for the same Reasons, of Mercy and Goodness, he waits for the most proper Seasons to impart his Revealed Will to them; and to have it preached to them before, would be only to increase their Condemnation: And it is not only Just, but Merciful, for him to with-hold the Knowledge of his Revealed Will from those who he foresees would reject it, and abuse the Opportunities which should

should be offer'd them, to the Aggravation of their own Guilt and Punishment. Especially if it be observed,

2. That as to particular Persons, we have Reason to believe, that God, who by so wonderful a Providence has taken Care that every Nation under Heaven might have the True Religion preach'd in it, and who has the whole World at his Disposal, and orders all Things with great Regard to the Salvation of Men; we have abundant Cause to think, that he would, by some of the various Methods of his Providence, or even by Miracle, bring such Men to the Knowledge of the Truth, who live according to their present Knowledge, with a sincere and honest Endeavour to improve it. When St. *Peter* was by Revelation sent to *Cornelius*, he made this Inference from it, *Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation, he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him*, Acts x. 34, 35. From whence, what less can we conclude, than that every Man, in any Part of the World, who is sincerely good and pious in the Practice of his Duty, so far as it is known to him, shall rather, by an express Revelation, have the rest discover'd to him, as in the Instance of *Cornelius*, which gave Occasion to these Words of St. *Peter*; than he shall be suffer'd to perish, for want of a true Faith, and sufficient Knowledge of his Duty? And it is Just with God, to punish those *Heathens* who sin without any Revealed Law, for their Sins against Natural Reason and Conscience, and for neglecting to use and improve their Reason, and to embrace the Opportunities afforded them of becoming Christians. We may likewise be certain, that besides Natural Reason and Conscience, God, in his Goodness, is not wanting to afford such Inward Motions and Convictions of Mind to such of the *Heathen* as are not wilfully blind and stupified by their Vices, as may prepare them for the Reception of the Gospel, which, by his Providence, he gives them

so many Opportunities of becoming acquainted withal: And if once they do discern the Defects and Faults of their own Religions, which are so grosly against Natural Reason and Conscience, they may make enquiry of *Christians*, concerning their Religion, as some of the *Americans* did of *Cortes*'s; and the *Christians* (some of them at least) however negligent they be in propagating it, would never refuse to instruct them in it. And it must be remembred, that among those who have not received the True Religion, yet many Points are taught and believed, which had their Original from Revelation, as is evident, not only of the *Mahometans*, but of several *Heathen* Nations; which Points are so many Steps and *Preparatives* towards the Reception of the whole Truth, if they be not wanting to themselves in pursuing them in their immediate Tendency and Consequences.

I shall not say, that the Merits of Christ, and the Salvation of the Gospel, do extend to those who die under Invincible Ignorance of it, having in the Integrity of their Hearts, lived according to the best of their Knowledge: I believe rather, that God suffers no Man so qualified and disposed, to remain in invincible Ignorance. But it is sufficient to vindicate God's Justice and Goodness, that all Nations have had such Opportunities of coming to the Knowledge of the Truth; and great Allowances may be made at the Last Day, for the Ignorance and unhappy Circumstances of particular Men. It was well said, That when God hath not thought fit to tell us how he will be pleased to deal with such Persons, it is not fit for us to tell him how he ought to deal with them. But if it be difficult for us now, to *think* how it will please God to deal with the *Heathen*; it would be a thousand times more difficult to conceive how the gracious and and merciful God could Govern and Judge the World, if all Mankind were in the state of *Heathens*, without any Divine Revelation.

What

What will become of the *Heathen*, as to their Eternal State, is not the Subject of this Discourse, nor doth it concern us to know; some of them will have more to plead for themselves, in point of Ignorance, than others can have; and they are in the hands of the merciful Creator and Saviour of Mankind, and there we must leave them. But it must be acknowledg'd, that it is much more agreeable to the Goodness and Mercy of God, to reveal his Will, and to give so many Opportunities to the World to be instructed in it, though never so many should neglect the Means of Salvation; than it to is suppose him to take no care to reduce Mankind to the Sense and Practice of Virtue and Religion, but to let them continue in all manner of Idolatry and Wickedness, without giving them any warning against it. *I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth. Look unto me, and be ye saved all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else. Come ye near unto me, hear ye this; I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, there am I,* Isa. xlv. 19, 22. and xlviii. 16.

Having proved, that the Scriptures want nothing requisite to a *Divine Revelation*, in regard either of their *Antiquity* or *Promulgation*; I proceed to shew, That they have *sufficient Evidence*, both by *Prophecies* and *Miracles*, in proof of their *Authority*.

This *Evidence* depends upon Matter of Fact, which concerns either the *Prophecies* and *Miracles* themselves, in their several Circumstances, as we find them stand recorded; or the Lives and Personal Qualifications of those by whom they were performed, or by whom they are related in the Scriptures. For if we can be assured both that they are truly related, and that, if the *Prophecies* and *Miracles* were such as they are related to have been, they could proceed from none but a Divine Power; we have all the Evidence for the Truth of the Scriptures that can be had for a Revelation.

CHAP. III.

Of Moses *and* Aaron.

THAT *Moses* was a very Great and Wise Man, and a most ancient Law-giver, is related by several of the most eminent Heathen Writers; and I think it has never been denied by any Man. But it is no less evident, that he was likewise a very Good and Pious Man. The first Forty Years of his Life, which were spent in Honour, he passes over in Silence, mentioning nothing of his own Education, nor of his Learning, *in all the Wisdom of the Ægyptians*, tho' this be related by St. *Stephen*, who also says, that he was *exceeding fair, and mighty in words and in deeds*, (Acts vii. 20, 22.) or renowned both for the Arts of Peace and the Glory of Arms: His Beauty and his Wisdom are likewise taken Notice of [a] by *Trogus Pompeius*, as well as by [b] *Josephus*, who also writes, That *Moses* obtained a memorable Conquest over the *Æthiopians*, who had over-run *Ægypt*. And [c] *Artapanus* mentions him as General of the *Ægyptian* Forces against the *Æthiopians*, in a War which lasted Ten Years. However, we may be certain, that his Life in *Pharaoh*'s Court was not such, as that he had performed nothing considerable, or which might deserve to be taken Notice of: Yet the first Thing which *Moses* mentions of himself, is his killing the *Ægyptian*, Exod. ii. 12. an Action, which some have thought blameable, with little Reason indeed; but he took no Care to prevent the Censure, though St. *Stephen* vindicates him, by observing that he acted by a Divine Commission. For Forty Years more, he says little of him-

[a] Justin. l. 36. c. 2. [b] Antiq. l. 2. c. 5.
[c] Apud Euseb. Præpar. Evan. l. 9. c. 27.

self,

self, but that he dwelt in the Land of *Midian*, and there married *Jethro*'s Daughter, by whom he had Two Sons. And when God had appeared to him in the Bush, it is said, that afterwards, the *Lord met him, and sought to kill him*, (Exod. iv. 24.) for having neglected to circumcise one of his Sons. *Moses* has left such an Account of himself, as might seem Detraction, if another had given it; so much is concealed, and so little told, but what was either really to be blamed, or might be liable to Misconstruction. He frequently declares his own Failings and Infirmities, *Exod.* iii. 11. and iv. 1, 10, 13. *Numb.* xi. 10. xx. 12. and xxvii. 14. and never speaks any Thing tending to his own Praise, but upon a just and necessary Occasion, when it might become a prudent and modest Man, especially one Divinely Inspired: For all the Praise of such an one doth not terminate in himself, but is attributed to God, whose Instrument and Servant he is; and in such Cases where God's Honour is concerned, it was a Duty to set forth the Favour and Goodness of God towards him, though some Honour did redound to himself thereby. The greatest Masters of Decency have not thought it always improper for Men to commend themselves, either because they supposed some Occasions might require it, or because it was a more usual Thing in ancient Times, when Mens Lives and Manners were more natural and sincere; and they oftner spoke as they thought both of themselves and others; yet we no where find Men speaking so freely in Disparagement of themselves, as in the Holy Scriptures: Which shews, that *Moses*, and the rest of the Inspired Writers, little regarded their own Praise or Dispraise, but wrote what God was pleased to appoint; it being a Thing indifferent to them, so God might be honoured, whether they lost or gained in their own Reputation by it. But what we read of *Moses*, Numb. xii. 3. that he was *very meek above all the men which*

were upon the face of the earth, which is the only commendable Character that *Moses* gives of himself, may be translated, that he was the most *afflicted Man*, (according to the Marginal Reading;) and if he mentions his own Meekness, he mentions also his *great Anger*, *or heat of Anger*, Exod. xi. 8. and his being *very wroth*, Num. xvi. 15. But if *Moses* had not had more respect to Truth, than to his own Reputation, he would never have left it upon Record, That he so often declined the Message and Employment which God appointed him to undertake, *Exod.* iii. 11, 13. and iv. 1, 10, 13, 14. and that God was angry with him upon other occasions, and for that reason would not permit him to enter into the promised Land: He would certainly have ascribed *Balaam*'s Prophecy, and *Jethro*'s Advice, to himself; at least he would never have recorded, That by *Jethro*'s Counsel, he took up a new and better Method for the Administration of Justice: If he had been led by Ambition and Vain-glory, he would have endeavoured by these things, to adorn his own Character; and would never have lessen'd it, by telling his own Infirmities at the same time, when, to the Diminution of himself, he publishes the Excellencies of others. The Wonders of the Magicians of *Ægypt* are not conceal'd by him: and being to give an Account of his own Genealogy from *Levi*, he first sets down the Families of *Reuben* and *Simeon*, the two elder Brothers, lest he might seem to arrogate too much to himself, and his own Tribe. Some have observed, that *Moses* relates his own Birth to have been by a Marriage contrary to the Laws afterwards by himself established: which indeed is doubtful, by reason of the Latitude of Signification in the Word *Sister* in the *Hebrew* Language, which is here taken by the *Septuagint* for his Cousin *German*, (Exod. vi. 20.) yet it is certain, he was not careful to avoid the being thought to have been born from such a Marriage, as he would have been, if his Laws

Laws had been of his own Contrivance, lest his own Regulation, or the Authority of his Laws, or perhaps both, might have suffered by it, *Exod.* vi. 14, 20. He sets forth the Ingratitude, Idolatry, and perpetual Revolts and Murmurings of his whole Nation, and relates the Failings and Faults of their Ancestors the Patriarchs, and particularly of *Levi*, from whom he was descended, *Gen.* xxxiv. 30. and xlix. 6. He spares neither his People, nor his Ancestors, nor himself, in what he relates; and these are all the Characters of a faithful Historian, and a sincere Man, that can be desired.

And as *Moses* was not ambitious of Praise, so neither was he ambitious of Power and Dominion. For besides that he entered upon such an Undertaking, as no sober Man would have attempted without a Revelation, it appearing otherwise impossible to accomplish it, his whole Conduct shews, that he had no design of advancing his own Interest or Dominion. If he had been never so Ambitious, he needed not have gone into the Wilderness to seek his Preferment, amongst a wandering and stubborn People, when he had been bred up to all the Honours and the Pleasures that *Ægypt* or *Pharaoh*'s Court could afford: but he *refused to be called the son of* Pharaoh'*s daughter*; *chusing rather to suffer Affliction with the People of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season*; *esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of* Ægypt, Heb. xi. 24, 25. He undertook to lead the People of *Israel*, for Forty Years, through a barren Wilderness; where he could promise himself but a very uneasie and inglorious Reign, if that had been his Design; and, by the course of Nature, he could not hope to outlive that Period of Time; and tho' he was preserved, in his old Age, in the full Strength and Vigour of Manhood; yet, upon their Entrance into the *Promised Land*, he meekly resigned himself to Death, in the very Sight and Borders of *Canaan*; knowing before-hand

that he must not be suffered to possess the Land which he had been so many Years, in so great Dangers, leading the People of *Israel* to enjoy; though he doth not conceal how desirous he was to pass over *Jordan*, Deut. iii. 23, *&c.*. The History of his Death is like that of his Life, related with a peculiar kind of native Simplicity: He is not said to be taken up into Heaven, as *Enoch* and *Elijah* were, and as the *Romans* feigned of *Romulus*, but to *die*; and his Sepulchre was hid, to prevent the Superstitious and Idolatrous Veneration which might have been paid to the Remains of so Great a Person. And tho' he had Sons, yet they were but private Men, no otherwise known to us, than as they were his Sons; the Government he conferred upon *Joshua*, one of another Tribe. *Moses* therefore was the fartheſt of any Man from vain-glorious, or ambitious and aspiring Designs; and could propose no other Advantage to himself, but the fulfilling the Will of God, delivering his Commandments to the People of *Israel*, and following his Directions in his Conduct and Government.

Aaron was of a different Temper from *Moses*, and was envious of him, and both *Aaron* and *Miriam* murmured against him. It is so notorious, that there could be no Contrivance between them to deceive the People; that it was the immediate and visible Power of God which kept *Aaron* as well as the rest in Obedience to *Moses*. Upon *Moses*'s Absence, *Aaron* complied with the People, in making a Golden Calf; and his two eldest Sons offered strange Fire before the Lord, which he had not commanded; for which they were both destroyed by Fire miraculously issuing out from the Presence of the Lord: And *Aaron held his peace*, knowing that this Punishment was inflicted by God himself, and having nothing to reply to *Moses*, when he declared to him the Justice of it. And both *Aaron* and his other two Sons are forbidden, upon Pain of Death, to mourn for them, *Lev.* x. 1, 2, 3, 6.

At

At last, by the Commandment of God, *Aaron* goes up into *Mount Hor*, to die there, not being permitted to enter into the *Land of Promise*.

Thus *Moses* and *Aaron* were sometimes at Disagreement, *Aaron* envying *Moses*: *Aaron* lost two of his Sons, by a signal Judgment from Heaven; and *Moses* advanced neither of his; and both *Moses* and *Aaron* died by the particular Appointment and Command of God, for their Offences against him, never enjoying, nor, for some time before, expecting to enjoy the *Land of Promise*, Numb. xx. 12. Deut. i. 37. And therefore, as they could never have performed what they did, but by the Almighty Power of God; so they could have no Motive or Inducement to attempt it, but his Command and Promise of Assistance revealed to them.

CHAP. IV.

Of the Pentateuch.

AS the Books entitled to *Moses* are confessed by all to be of the greatest Antiquity; so we have it confirmed to us by the Authority of *Heathen* Writers themselves, that the Books which go under his Name, are indeed of his Writing; besides the unanimous Testimony of the whole *Jewish* Nation, ever since *Moses*'s Time, from the first writing of them: Which is infinitely better Proof of their being Authentick, and entitled to the true Author, than can be pretended for any Books but the Holy Scriptures. Divers Texts of the *Pentateuch* imply, that it was written by *Moses*; and the Book of *Joshua*, as well as other Books of Scripture, import as much; and though some Passages have been thought to imply the contra-

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ry, yet this is but a late Opinion, and has been sufficiently confuted by learned Men.

It is observable, whoever wrote these Five Books, that there is no Partiality shewn to any one whomsoever. *Noah* is said to be overcome with Wine, and exposed to the Mockery of one of his Sons. *Lot* is described not only to have been drucken, but to have lain with his own Daughters. *Abraham* himself denies his Wife twice; and *Isaac* imitates him in it. *Jacob* gets the Blessing, by Fraud and Subtilty, from his Brother *Esau*. *Joseph*'s Brethren sell him into *Ægypt*; and he, when he is there, learns to swear *by the Life of* Pharaoh. The Faults of *Aaron*, and of *Moses* himself, (as I have already observed) are not concealed. On the other side, particular Notice is taken how *Melchizedeck* blessed *Abraham*, and received Tythes of him: *And without all contradiction, the less is blessed of the better*, Heb. vii. 7. The Advice of *Jethro* is recorded; and the Prophecies of *Balaam* himself are punctually set down. It was no Design of the sacred Pen-man to write a Panegyrick upon any Man, but to represent the Failings and Infirmities, as well as the Excellencies of each Person; and to shew by what various Methods the Providence of God brought to pass his gracious Designs; how he turn'd Evil into Good, and made use even of the Infirmities and Sins of Men, to accomplish his purposes.

In the Book of *Genesis*, we have a short Account of the most memorable and remarkable Things, which had past, to the times of *Moses*; as the Creation of the World, the Institution of the *Sabbath*, the Fall of Man, the Promise of the *Messiah*, and the *Custom* of offering Sacrifices as Types of his Death: who first committed Murther, and who first brought in Polygamy; the Invention of divers Arts, the Flood, the Confusion of Tongues; the Original of the several Nations of the World, with the Chronology of the whole: all which is comprehended in a little Compass,

pass, but a larger and more particular Account is given of *Abraham* and his Family: For here the Scene begins to open to the main Design of the Work, the Book of *Genesis* being as an Introduction to the rest of the *Pentateuch*, and containing such things as were requisite to be premised. And in the beginning of the History of *Abraham*, it is noted, that *the Canaanite was then in the Land*, Gen. xii. 6. even at that very time when *Abraham* erected an Altar to the Lord, ℣ 7. this being a great Encouragement to the *Israelites*, to excite them to follow the Example of their Father *Abraham*, who worshipped the True God, in a publick and solemn manner, in that Land which they were now going to possess, and amongst that People which they were now to drive out, and which, at that time when the Land was promis'd them, were the Inhabitants of it; and God, who had protected *Abraham* in so signal a manner, would no less assist them.

And if we consider those things particularly, wherein *Moses* himself is concerned as an Agent, as well as an Historian, there can be no Pretence for any Man to doubt, but that at least the principal Points of the History of *Moses* are true; that is, that *Moses* was the Governor or General of the People of *Israel*, who conducted them out of *Ægypt*; that they travell'd for many Years in the Wilderness; that they fought divers Battels with the several Nations, who oppos'd their journeying into the Land of *Canaan*; and, that *Moses* gave them the Laws which we find there recorded. These are the chief Points of the History of *Moses*, which are, as it were, the Foundation of all the rest; the rest being but as Circumstances to shew the manner of doing it, and the Power by which all this was done. And that these main Points are true, it was never denied by those *Heathens* themselves who most reproached and vilify'd the *Jewish* Nation: They acknowledg'd that *Moses* was the great General and Law-giver

Law-giver of the *Israelites*; they owned that the *Israetites* came out of *Ægypt*; they could deny nothing of the History itself, but only gave wrong Accounts, partly out of Ignorance, and partly out of Malice and Design, of the Manner and Means by which this was effected, and the Reasons and Occasions upon which it came to pass. From the Books of *Josephus* against *Apion*, in which he gives an Account of what the most ancient Authors of other Nations have delivered concerning the *Jews*; and from what the latter Heathens, *Strabo*, *Tacitus*, *Justin*, and others, after the *Jews* became so odious and contemptible in the Eyes of all Nations, have written; it is evident, that the great and fundamental Points, as to the Matters of Fact, are confess'd; and the only Dispute is concerning the Manner in which they were brought about, and the Means whereby all was effected.

Now we take the Histories of all other Nations, rather from themselves, than from Foreigners and Strangers to their Affairs, or profess'd Enemies; and it were extreme Partiality to admit the Accounts we have of the *Jewish* Affairs, from Authors who lived so much too late to have any certain Information of the Things they write about, and who, upon every Occasion, shew such Disaffection to their Name and Nation, and contradict each other, and themselves too, as *Josephus* shews; it would, I say, be notorious Partiality to follow such Authors, rather than credit the *Jewish* Records attested and delivered down to us by the unanimous Approbation and Testimony of the whole Nation.

And when I come to consider the Miracles wrought by *Moses*, I shall prove, that they were of that Nature, and performed in such a Manner, as that they could not be feign'd or counterfeit at first, nor the Account given of them in the *Pentateuch* falsified afterwards; and therefore these Five Books of *Moses* must be genuine,

nuine, and of divine Authority, being written by him who had so many ways given Evidence of his divine Commission.

CHAP. V.

Of the Predictions or Prophecies contained in the Books of Moses.

IT was foretold by God himself, upon the Fall of our First Parents, That *the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head*, Gen. iii. 15. [a] *Maimonides* is observ'd to take particular Notice, that it was the Seed of the *Woman*, and not of the Man; and the *Jews*, in their *Targums*, are observ'd to apply this Text to the *Messias*, which was fulfill'd in our Saviour Christ, who was born of a Woman, that was a Virgin, and had no Man to his Father: And therefore this Prediction, express'd thus precisely concerning the Seed of the Woman, could be fulfill'd in no other Person; and no other Person ever gain'd such Victories over the Enemy of Mankind, who had so long tyrannized over the Sons of Men. God reveal'd the precise Time of the Flood to *Noah*; who thereupon built an Ark, and foretold the Destruction of the World to that wicked Generation, and was a *Preacher of Righteousness* and *Repentance* to them, *Gen.* vi. 3. After the Flood, *Noah*, by a Prophetick Spirit, foretold the Fate and Condition of the Posterity of his three Sons, *Gen.* ix. 25. That *Canaan* should be Servant to *Shem*; which was accomplish'd, when the *Children of Israel*, the Posterity of *Shem*, subdued the *Canaanites*, and possess'd their Land, about Eight hundred Years after this Prophecy: That *Japhet* should dwell in the Tents

[a] Maim. More Nevoch. Par. 2. c. 30.

of *Shem*; which was fulfill'd in the *Greeks* and *Romans*, descended from *Japhet*, when they conquer'd *Asia*: That *Canaan* should likewise be the Servant of *Japhet*, as well as of *Shem*. Upon which Mr. *Mede* observes, [b] that the Posterity of *Cham* never subdued the Children either of *Japhet*, or of *Shem*; tho' *Shem* hath subdued *Japhet*, and *Japhet* hath conquer'd *Shem*: which made [c] *Hannibal*, descended from *Canaan*, cry out, with Amazement of Soul, *Agnosco fatum Carthaginis*.

God promiseth *Abraham* a Son, in his old Age, by *Sarah* his Wife, who was likewise of a great Age; and declares, that his Posterity, by this Son, should be exceeding numerous; that they should inherit the Land of *Canaan*, after they had been afflicted in a strange Land Four hundred Years, *Gen.* xv. 13. and that then they should come out of that Land *with great substance*; but that God would *judge* the Nation that had oppress'd them; or, that he would procure their Deliverance, by signal Judgments upon their Oppressors; and that in the *fourth Generation* they should be brought back again to the *Land of Promise*, ℣ 16. (the Bounds whereof are described, ℣ 18.) which agrees exactly with the Deliverance of the *Children* of *Israel* our of *Ægypt*, computing the Years from the time that the Promise was made to *Abraham*, (*Exod.* xii. 40. (*Gal.* iii. 17.) and reckoning the Four Generations to be betwixt *Isaac* the Son promised to *Abraham*; and *Moses*, in whom the Prediction was fulfilled. Or, if we reckon, as divers [d] *Rabbins* do, from the time when the Children of *Israel* came into *Ægypt*, from *Levi* to *Moses*, and from *Judah* to *Caleb*, were Four Generations inclusively. And whereas in our Translation we read, *the Children of* Israel *went up harnessed*, or *five in a rank*, *out of the Land of* Ægypt, Exod. xiii. 18. in the *Septuagint* Version it is rendred,

[b] Mede, *Book* 1. *Disc.* 48. [c] Liv. l. 27.
[d] Menass. Ben. Isr. conciliat. Qu. in Gen. xlii. § 1.

They

They went out of *Ægypt* in [c] the Fifth Generation, including the *Children* of the Fifth Generation, whose Parents were the Fourth. In like manner the *Olympiad* was styled πενταετηρις, not because it consisted of Five Years, but * because it returned every fifth Year. And when the Intercalation was made every third Year, the intermediate Space of Time was called τριετηρις. Or, if we compute from the First Generation born in *Ægypt*, *Moses* and *Aaron* were of the Third Generation, and their Children of the Fourth entred in the Promis'd Land. To compute from the Fourth Generation of the *Amorites*, may seem precarious; because we have no other means to know the Number of their Generations, that by an Estimate made from the Generations of the *Hebrews*. But whatever way we compute the Generations which we find recorded of the *Hebrews*; the Prophecy was certainly fulfilled. This Promise made to *Abraham and his Seed*, was renew'd several times, and repeated again to him, and to *Isaac* and *Jacob*, Gen. xxvi. 3. and xxviii. 14. and was all along depended upon by the *Israelites*. God foretold of *Abraham*, That *all the nations of the earth should be blessed in him*, Gen. xviii. 18. which was fulfilled, in that God made *Abraham*'s Posterity his Messengers to communicate his Will to the rest of Mankind, and more especially in that Blessing which all Nations received in the Birth of *Christ*. This is a remarkable Prophecy concerning the greatest of Blessings, and is often repeated. The Blessing promised to *Abraham* for *Ishmael*, was no less punctually

[c] Πεμπτη δε γενεα ανεβησαν. Exod. xiii. 18. Vid. Voss. de Transl. LXX. Interpr. c. 14.

* *Idque tempus* τελετηλδα *apellabant, quòd tertio quoque anno interkalabatur, quamvis biennii circuitus, & revera* διετηρις *esset: unde Mysteria, quæ Libero Patri alternis fiunt annis, Trieterica à Poetis dicuntur. Postea* τετραετηρίδα *fecerunt, sed eam, quòd quinto quoque anno redibat,* πενταετηρίδα *nominabant.* Censorin. de Die. Nat. c. 18.

fulfill'd:

fulfill'd: *And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I will bless him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly. Twelve Princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great Nation*, Gen. xvi. 20. fulfilled, *Gen.* xxv. 12. 1 *Chron.* i. 29.

The Prophecy of *Isaac*, concerning *Esau* and *Jacob*, Gen. xxvii. 40. First, That the Posterity of *Esau* should serve *Jacob*'s Posterity, was fulfill'd, in *David*'s Victories over the *Edomites*, 2 Sam. viii. 14. 1 Kings xi. 15. 1 Chron. xviii. 13. and by *Amaziah*, 2 Kings xiv. 7. and then that part of it, That the *Edomites* should *break the yoke from off their neck*, was accomplished, 2 *Kings* viii. 20. 2 *Chron.* xxi. 8. *Joseph*'s own Dream, and his Interpretation of the Dream of *Pharaoh*, when none of the Magicians or Wise Men of *Ægypt* were able to interpret it, had remarkable and publick Circumstances, that could neither be mistaken nor forgotten in the Accomplishment. *Jacob* prefers *Ephraim* the younger Son of *Joseph*, before his elder Brother *Manasseh*, and foretels, that tho' *Manasseh* should be great, yet *Ephraim* should *be greater than he, and his seed should become a multitude of nations*, Gen. xlviii. 19. Accordingly we find, that after the Division of the Ten Tribes under *Jeroboam* an *Ephrathite*, those Tribes were denominated from *Ephraim*, as the two remaining Tribes had their Denomination from *Judah*; and the Royal Seat of the Kings of *Israel* was at *Samaria*, in the Tribe of *Ephraim*. *Jacob* afterwards describes the Borders of their several Possessions in the Land of *Canaan*, tho' it were so many Years after divided among the Tribes by Lot, *Gen.* xlix. 13. He foretold the different State and Condition of the rest of his Sons; and particularly prophesied, That *Judah should become very honourable among his Brethren, and victorious over his enemies*; and that *the sceptre should not depart from Judah unto Shilo came*, i. e. until the *Messias* came, as the *Jewish Targums* explain it. And upon the fulfilling of this and other Prophecies in the *Pentateuch*,

tateuch, not only the *Jews*, but the *Samaritans*, who received no other Prophecies as they did these, expected the *Messias* at the Time in which our Saviour appear'd in the World; and believ'd on him, because they saw the Prophecies fulfill'd in Him, *Joh.* iv. 25, 29, 39, 42. *Joseph took an oath of the Children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence*, Gen. l. 25. Which they did accordingly, *Exod.* xiii. 19. *Jacob* had desir'd to be buried in the Land of *Canaan*; insomuch that he caus'd *Joseph* to swear to him, that he would bury him there, and not in *Ægypt*; and *Joseph* and his Brethren went into *Canaan* to bury their Father, because that was the Land where *Abraham* and *Isaac* had been buried, and the Land which their Posterity was afterwards to possess: But *Joseph*, as a farther Token of Assurance to the *Israelites*, that they should inherit that Land, would not have his own Corpse carry'd thither, at his Death, but order'd his Bones to be kept, and carry'd up by their Posterity, at their leaving *Ægypt*; and in the mean time, they were a perpetual Monument and Representation to them of the Promise made to their Fore-fathers, and a Ground and Motive for their Trust and Confidence in God for the Accomplishment of it.

The Remembrance of *Balaam*'s Prophecy was preserv'd in the *East*; and the Wise Men, upon the Appearance of the Star, knowing it to be fulfill'd, came to *Jerusalem*, to enquire where they might find the *King of the Jews*, then newly born, *Numb.* xxiv. 15. *Matt.* ii. 2. [f] He propheſied likewise of *Agag* by Name, saying of *Israel*, *And his king shall be higher than Agag, and his kingdom shall be exalted*, Numb. xxiv. 7. Thereby foretelling the Government of *Israel* by Kings, and the Destruction of *Agag* by *Saul*; who being the first King that ever *Israel* had, overcame *Agag* King of the *Amalekites*, 1 Sam. xv. 8. The

[f] Hieron. ad Ezek. xxxviii.

same *Balaam* foretold the Conquest of *Alexander*, in these Words, *And ships shall come from the coasts of Chittim, and shall afflict Ashur*, Num. xxiv. 24. By the *Coasts of Chittim*, are to be understood the Coasts of *Greece*, from whence *Alexander*'s Army was transported into *Asia*; for *Alexander* came out of the Land of *Chettim*, or *Chittim*, 1 *Mac.* i. 1. And *Perseus* was King of the *Citims*, or *Macedonians*, chap. viii. 5. He foretold the Fate of the *Moabites*, the *Edomites*, the *Kenites*, and the *Amalekites*; and the Conquest of the *Assyrians*, as well as the Success and Victories of the *Israelites*, *Num.* xxiv. 17. These several Prophecies we have recorded in the Books of *Moses*, and ascribed to others; and the last, containing so many remarkable things, is from the Mouth of an Enemy.

Moses himself foretold, That the *Children of Israel* should, after Forty Years, come into the *Land of Promise*; That they should prove Victorious over the *Canaanites*; and, That their Country should, by the Divine Care and Protection, be preserv'd in safety, whilst they went up to worship at *Jerusalem*, thrice every Year: *Thrice in the year shall all your Men-children appear before the Lord God, the God of Israel: For I will cast out the nations before thee, and enlarge thy borders; neither shall any man desire thy land, when thou shalt go up to appear before the Lord thy God, thrice in the Year*, Exod. xxxiv. 23, 24. Here is the Promise of a constant Miracle to be fulfill'd to the *Israelites* thrice every Year, as long as their Government stood: All their Males were to go up to *Jerusalem*, at three set and known times, every Year; and yet their Enemies round about them, whom they had so many ways provok'd, were, by the Almighty Power of God, restrain'd from taking any Advantage of this Opportunity, which was frequently and notoriously given them, of invading their Country. The very Nature and Constitution of the Jewish Worship, made it impossible for their Government

to

to subsist in the Observation of their Religion, without a Miracle wrought three times a Year for their Preservation. And the fulfilling of this Promise, which God had made to them by *Moses*, and the preserving of them in the performance of that Worship which he had appointed them, was a continual Confirmation of his Law, and a repeated Assurance that it was from God. That they resorted to *Jerusalem* every Year to solemnize these three Festivals, we may observe from the Scriptures of the New Testament. And [g] *Josephus* witnesses, that to the time of the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, they left their Habitations, and went thither at these solemn Seasons: But God, for their heinous Wickedness, having withdrawn his Protection, that which was wont to be the City of Refuge and Security, was the Place of their Ruin and Extirpation.

By the Law of *Moses* likewise, every Seventh Year they were permitted neither to sow their Land, nor to prune their Vineyards, nor to gather any Corn or Fruits that grew of their own accord: Which was a Law that must have brought them under great Extremities; and the Observation of it had been impracticable, if the extraordinary and miraculous Blessing of God had not supplied this constant want of the Seventh Year's Product, with as constant an Overplus in the preceding Year. For as God, by *Moses*, foretold, That on the Sixth Day there should fall Manna enough to supply them on the *Sabbath-Day*; so they had a Promise of Three Years Fruits precisely every Sixth Year, to supply that Want to which the Sabbatical Year must otherwise have reduced them: *And if ye shall say, What shall we eat the seventh Year? Behold, we shall not sow, nor gather in our encrease: Then I will command my blessing upon you in the sixth Year, and it shall bring forth Fruit for three years. And ye shall sow the eighth year, and eat yet of old fruit, until*

[g] Jos. de Bell. Jud. l. 2. c. 21, 23. l. 7. c. 17.

the ninth year; *until her fruits come in, ye shall eat of the old store*, Lev. xxv. 20, 21, 22. Which is another clear Instance, that the People of *Israel* could never have subsisted in the Observation of their Law, but by the constant and miraculous Accomplishment of the Prophecies, which contain'd the Promises made to them for their Preservation. But for their Distrust of the Divine Protection, in the Violation of this Law, they were to be punished with Captivity, *Lev.* xxvi. 34. And the Time of the Captivity in *Babylon* was, *till the land had enjoyed her sabbaths*, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 21. In Consideration of this Law, the Tribute of every Seventh Year was remitted to the *Jews*, by [h] *Alexander the Great*, and by the *Roman* Emperors. The Observation of the Sabbatical Years was continued to the Time of [i] *Herod*, who, in the third Year of his Reign, made his Advantage of it, in possessing himself of *Jerusalem*; God, for their Sins, as he sometimes punish'd his People with Famine, then suffering them, in the Sabbatical Year, to have a Scarcity of Provisions, that *Herod* their King might rule over them; that they might from thence learn, that the Sceptre was to depart from *Judah*.

Moses, by God's express Command, denounced this Judgment upon the murmuring *Israelites*, that all of them should die in the Wilderness, that their Children should wander there Forty Years; and that at the end of that Term of Years, they should be put into Possession of the Promised Land: *Say unto them, As truly as I live, saith the Lord, as ye have spoken in mine ears, so will I do to you: your carcases shall fall in this wilderness, and all that were numbered of you according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, which have murmured against me. Doubtless, ye shall not come into the land, concerning which I sware to make you dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun. But your little ones,*

[h] Joseph. Antiq. l. 11. c. ult. 14. c. 17. [i] Id. l. 14. c. ult. l. 15. c. 1.

which

which ye said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have despised; but as for you, your carcases, they shall fall in this wilderness, and your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years, Numb. xiv. 28. Nothing can be more express and particular than this Predictioa, and nothing was ever more exactly fulfilled. At the end of Forty Years, *there was not left a man of them*, save *Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun*, chap. xxvi. 65. In Blessing the Twelve Tribes of *Israel* he foretold the peculiar State and Condition of every distinct Tribe, and as *Jacob* had done, he foretold the Pre-eminence of *Ephraim* above *Manasseh*; *they are the ten thousands of Ephraim, and they are the thousands of Manasseh*, Deut. xxxiii. 17. He foretold to them all in general, that they should have miraculous Success against the *Canaanites*; That they should possess themselves of their Land; That they should set Kings over them; That they should have a peculiar Place of Worship, whither they should all resort; and that they should have the Divine Oracles, and a Succession of Prophets, for their Direction in all Matters of great Importance and Difficulty. And *Joshua* appeals to the Experience of the *Children of Israel*, whether all had not been fulfilled which was promised, as far as his Time: *And behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth, and ye know in all your hearts, and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you: all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof*, Josh. xxiii. 14. The Extent of the Dominions of the *Children of Israel*, after they came to be settled in the Land of *Canaan*, is foretold, *Exod.* xxiii. 31. *Deut.* xi. 24. and fulfilled, 2 *Sam.* viii. 3. *Ezra* iv. 20. And *Solomon*, at the Dedication of the Temple, declared in the Audience of all the People, That *there had not failed one word of all God's good promise, which he promised by the hand of Moses his servant*, 1 Kings viii. 56.

Moses also foretold, that besides a constant Succession of Prophets, for many Ages, there should arise a Prophet of extraordinary Power and Authority; and whosoever would not hear that Prophet, should be destroyed, *Deut.* xviii. 18. This Prophet was the great Expectation of the *Jews*, at the time of our Saviour's coming, *Joh.* i. 21. vi. 14. vii. 40. And the Apostles prove our Saviour to be him, *Acts* iii. 22. vii. 37. Lastly, *Moses* foretold the Disobedience and the Revolt of the *Children of Israel*, the Judgments that should befal them for their Iniquities, and their Deliverance upon their Repentance: He foretold so many Years before they had any King, That they, and *their King whom they would set over them*, should be carried into Captivity; and that at the same time, when they were taken Captive by the *Assyrians*, who are described in the very same Words that the other Prophets use concerning them, the remainder should be carried into *Ægypt*, Deut. xxviii. 36, 49, 50, 68. And we see it came accordingly to pass, *Jer.* xliii. Their Cities were to be laid waste, and their Sanctuaries brought to Desolation, *Levit.* xxvi. 31. And the Siege of *Samaria* by the *Assyrians*, and of *Jerusalem* both by them and the *Romans*, is particularly described to the very Circumstance of their *eating the Flesh of their Sons, and of their Daughters*, Deut. xxviii. 53. Which was before threatned, *Lev.* xxvi. 29. And is here again repeated, that it might be the more taken notice of. It was again foretold by *Jeremiah*, the time approaching when it was to be fulfilled, *Jer.* xix. 9. And is a thing that has scarce ever happened in any other Siege but those of *Samaria* and of *Jerusalem*, Lam. ii. 20. and iv. 10. Bar. ii. 3. 2 Kings vi. 29. This monstrous and dreadful thing was twice known in *Jerusalem*; first, when it was besieged by *Nebuchadnezzar*; and again, [k] when it was destroyed by the *Romans* under

[k] Joseph. de Bell. Judaic. l. 7. c. 8.

Titus:

Titus: Such a Circumstance could not be foretold so long before, but by a Divine Prescience; and that so strange and unnatural a thing should befal the *Children of Israel* three several times, according to the express Words of a Prophecy, could have nothing of Chance in it.

Thus we see, that besides the Prophecies concerning the other Nations of the Earth, every State and Condition of the People of *Israel*, from their first Original, to the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, was the perpetual fulfilling of express Prophecies contained in the Books of *Moses*.

CHAP. VI.

Of the Miracles wrought by Moses.

IF it be once proved, That *Moses* did what is related of him in the *Pentateuch*; it will unavoidably follow, That he did it by a Divine Power, and that he was God's Servant and Minister; and that therefore whatsoever he did or wrote, as by his Direction and Command, was really so. For if there ever were or can be any such thing as a *Miracle*, it must be confessed, that the Works performed by *Moses* were such; and therefore the only Enquiry will be, Whether they were really performed by Him: since it is absurd to think, that God may not, upon great Reasons, alter the course of Nature.

And I shall undertake to prove, supposing only that there was such a Man as *Moses*, and that the Jewish Law was given by him, That it is of Divine Authority, and stands confirmed by all the Miracles which are related in the *Pentateuch*, to have been wrought by *Moses*. And that there was such a Man,

and that he delivered the Law to the *Israelites*, is affirmed by the best Heathen Authors, as *Diodorus Siculus*, *Strabo*, and others; and was never yet, that I have heard of, question'd by any Man: For those who will not acknowledge that *Moses* wrote the Books which contain it, yet confess, that the Law it self was of his prescribing. But if it should be questioned, whether there ever was such a Man, who gave them their Law; how absurd is it to imagine, that a new and burthensome Law, which at first was so very uneasy to them, and for which nothing but a full Persuasion of its Divine Authority, could ever have made them so zealous, should be received by any Nation, merely upon a feigned and groundless Report, that *Moses* had, at some time or other, delivered it, in such a Manner, and in such Circumstances, if there never had been such a Man, or such a Law-giver in the World? Could any one, or more Men, persuade a whole Nation to this? Or could a whole Nation conspire to deceive their Posterity with a Belief of it? What mighty Charm could there be in a Name never heard of before, and in a Story newly invented, that a whole Nation should presently grow fond of it? They must consider Humane Nature very little, who can fancy any Thing so unnatural.

I shall therefore take it for granted, that there was such a Man as *Moses*, and that the Jewish Law was given by him: And if it be once proved, that the Matters of Fact, or Miracles related of him, were indeed performed, as they are related to have been; no rational Man can doubt but that they were brought to pass by an Almighty Power. I shall now therefore consider the History of the *Jews* barely as National Records, not as written by an Inspired Author: For it will appear from them, considered only as an Account of Matter of Fact, that *Moses* was a Person inspired and assisted by God, and both wrote and did all

all by God's expreſs Will and Appointment. And if we queſtion the Authority of the Books of *Moſes* in this Matter, when they are conſidered but as National Records, it muſt be upon one of theſe Accounts; Either, 1. Becauſe the Matters of Fact contained in them, as they are there related to have been done, were not at firſt ſufficiently atteſted. Or, 2. Becauſe the Records themſelves are feigned, and therefore the Relations there ſet down, are not to be depended upon. For if the Miracles be ſufficiently atteſted, ſuppoſing the Truth of the Hiſtory; then, if the Hiſtory be true, the Miracles muſt be ſo too.

1. The Miracles and Matters of Fact contained in the Book of *Moſes*, as they are there related to have been done, were at firſt ſufficiently atteſted. The Permiſſion of Polygamy amongſt the *Iſraelites*, for the Increaſe of that People; the peculiar Fruitfulneſs of the Climate of [1] *Ægypt*, where the Women are obſerved to bring forth often two or three, ſometimes more Children at a Birth; the long Lives of Mankind, in thoſe Ages; and above all, the Promiſe of God made to *Abraham*, That he would bleſs and multiply his Poſterity in *Iſaac*'s Line, *Gen.* xxii. 17. cauſed the *Children of Iſrael* to be exceeding numerous, in a few Generations after they came into *Ægypt: A Syrian ready to periſh was their father*; *and he went down into Ægypt, and ſojourned there with a few, and became there a nation, great, mighty and populous*, Deut. xxvi. 5. The fighting Men, from twenty Years old and upward, that were numbered in the Wilderneſs of *Sinai*, in the ſecond Year after they came out of the Land of *Ægypt*, were *Six hundred thouſand, and three Thouſand and five hundred and fifty*, beſides the Tribe of *Levi*, Numb. i. 1, 46, 47. And the Males of the *Levites* that were numbered, from Thirty Years old to Fifty, *were Eight*

[1] Columell. de Re Ruſt. l. 3. c. 8. Plin. Hiſt. l. 7. c. 3. Aul. Gell. l. 10. c. 2.

thouſand

thousand and five hundred and fourscore, Num. iv. 47, 48. And the number of Males from Twenty Years old and upwards, which was taken in the Plains of *Moab*, was *Six hundred thousand, and a thousand seven hundred and thirty*, besides the *Levites*; and those that were numbred of them, were *Twenty and three thousand, all males from a month old and upwards*, and *not a man* of these were numbered before *in the wilderness of Sinai*, chap. xxvi. 51, 62, 64. And those of the other Sex must be supposed to have been about the same number, when both these Accounts were taken: In all, reckoning Men, Women, and Children, and Servants, the Number is computed at Three Millions.

And all this People, the Parents, and the Children, who, as they died, grew up in their stead, were conducted, for Forty Years together, by a constant course of Miracles wrought continually in their sight. God *took him a nation from the midst of another nation, by temptations, by signs, and by wonders, and by war, and by a mighty hand, and by a stretched out arm, and by great terrours*, Deut. iv. 34. They could not be ignorant, whether they were Miracles wrought to procure their Deliverance out of *Ægypt*; these were publick and notorious both to the *Israelites* and the *Ægyptians*. The Magicians were not able to do the like with their Inchantments, but were forced to confess, *This is the finger of God*, Exod. viii. 19. And they were of that nature, and of such mighty consequence, that they could not fail of being particularly taken notice of, when two Nations were so much concerned in the Effects and Events of them. The Children of *Israel* had been Witnesses of Ten Plagues inflicted successively upon the *Ægyptians*, in the most remarkable manner that can be conceived, to procure their Deliverance; and when *Pharaoh* pursued them, as they were going away, it was impossible for them, to escape from him but by Miracle; the People were in the greatest Consternation, they wished themselves again in *Ægypt*, and

and made such Expostulations with *Moses* as it was very natural for Men in that condition to make, and such as shewed, that, upon the first opportunity, they would have been ready to deliver up *Moses*, to secure themselves, and make their Peace with *Pharaoh*: *And they said unto Moses, Because there were no graves in Ægypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? Wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Ægypt? Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Ægypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the Ægyptians? For it had been better for us to serve the Ægyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness*, Exod. xiv. 11, 12. But the *Israelites* were purposely brought into this Distress, by God's express Will and Command, that he might *get him honour upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen*, ℣ 17. And the Sea being divided at *Moses*'s lifting up his Rod, the *Children of Israel* went *in the midst* of it *upon dry-ground, and the waters were a wall unto them on the right hand, and on the left*, ℣ 22. And could they be ignorant whether they walked in the Water, or upon dry Land? Whether they were the Men that had escaped, or whether they had been all drowned? The Words are express, that the Waters were on both sides of them, in their Passage, and that they were separated to make way for them; which could not fall out by any ebbing of the Sea, for then they would have had Water but on one side of them; whereas now the Waters stood equally on both hands: *The floods stood upright, as an heap, and the depths were congeal'd in the heart of the sea*, Exod. xv. 8. And nothing can be supposed more absurd, than it is to imagine, that neither the *Ægyptians* nor the *Israelites* should understand the Nature of the *Red-Sea*, but that the Course of the Tide should be known only to *Moses*. "There is no Man of Judgment, *says*[m] *a*

[m] *Sir* W. Raleigh, Pt. 1. l. 2. c. 3. § 9.

"*very*

" *very judicious Writer*, that can think that *Pharaoh* and " the *Ægyptians*, who then excell'd all Nations in the " Observations of the Heavenly Motions, could be ig- " norant of the Fluxes and Refluxes of the Sea, in his " his own Country, on his own Coasts, and in his " own most traded and frequented Ports and Havens; " and wherein his People having had so many Hundreds " of Years Experience of the Tides, he could not be " caught, as he was, through Ignorance, nor by any " foreknown or natural Accident, but by God's power- " ful Hand only. If *Moses* had taken the Advantage " and Opportunity of the Tide, he must have left all " that End of the *Red-Sea* towards *Sues* on his Left- " hand, dry and uncover'd, and when *Pharaoh* found " the Flood encreasing, he might in his Return have " gone before the Tide on his Right-hand. Those " Words of the Scriptures, that *God caused the Sea to run* " *back by a strong East wind*, do rather prove the Mi- " racle, than that thereby was caus'd an Ebb more than " ordinary: For that Sea did not lie East and West, " but in Effect North and South, and it must have " been a West and North-West Wind, that must have " driven those Waters away through their proper Cha- " nels, and to the South-East into the Sea. But the " East-Wind blew athwart the Sea, and cut it asun- " der, so as one part fell back towards the South, " and main Body thereof; the other part remained " towards *Sues* and the North: Which being unknown " to *Pharaoh*, while he was check'd by that Sea, " which used in all Times before to ebb away, the " Flood press'd him and overwhelm'd him.

At the giving of the Law, the whole People of *Israel* had Warning given them three Days before, that they might sanctify and prepare themselves to make their Appearance before the Lord: *All the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and* beheld *the Mountain smoaking:* And the Lord spake, in the Audience of the whole Assembly,

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the Words of the Ten Commandments; and they were struck with such a Terrour, that they removed and stood afar off, and desired *Moses* that he would acquaint them with what God should be pleas'd to give him in Command concerning them, that they might no longer hear God speaking to them, lest they should die, *Exod.* xx. 18. *Deut.* v. 22. *The cloud of the Lord was upon the tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys*, Exod. xl. 38. *Whether it were two days, or a month, or a year that the cloud tarried upon the tabernacle, remaining thereon, the children of Israel abode in their tents, and journeyed not, but when it was taken up, they journied*, Numb. ix. 22. From the Time of their Escape out of *Ægypt*, the *Pillar of the Cloud by day, and the Pillar of Fire by night*; the Manna with which they were fed, during the whole Time of their journeying in the Wilderness, till the very Day after they *had eaten of the corn of the land of Canaan*, Exod. xvi. 35. Josh. v. 12. And their Garments lasting for so long a Time, without any Decay, *Deut.* xxix. 5. These were constant and perpetual Miracles for forty Years together; and it is the most impossible Thing in the World to suppose, that a People consisting of so many Hundred Thousands, should for so long a time be imposed upon in Things of this Nature: Their Eyes, and Taste, and all their Senses were Witnesses, that they were conducted and fed and cloath'd by Miracle, for forty Years together.

Indeed, it was impossible to lead so great a Multitude, through a vast and barren Wilderness, by so long and tedious Journeys, without the Help of Miracles. If they had been under no other Distress but Want of Food, in so barren a Place, it had been impossible for any Number of Men, and much more for so vast a Multitude, to subsist for any time, without a Miracle: But they were fed with *Manna from Heaven*; not with such as the Manna is which is now any where

where to be found, which is a kind of Honey-dew; but with *Manna* which was fit for Nourishment, not for Physick, and so hard as to be ground in Mills, and beaten in Mortars, and baked in Pans, *Num.* xi. 8. And yet it was melted by the Sun, and bred Worms and stunk, if it were kept but one Night, except it were on the Night before the *Sabbath*, though again, when it was to be preserved for a Memorial to future Generations, nothing was more lasting; and it fell on every Day of the Week but the *Sabbath*. The Manna therefore which is now, of what sort soever it be, is of a quite different Nature from this Miraculous *Manna*, (tho' it have its Name from it) as a learned Physician [n] has proved. But if the Manna in it self had been natural and common Manna; yet that it should have Qualities which no other Manna ever had, that its Fall should be constant, as *Moses* foretold, but with as constant Intermission upon one particular Day every Week, according to his Prediction; this could not be without a manifest Miracle: Thus the Water flowing from the Rock was like other Water, but the manner of producing it was evidently miraculous. Their *Water* was as miraculous as their Food, and their *Cloathing* as either; neither their *Raiment decay'd*, nor their *Bread* and *Water fail'd*, 'till they arrived in the *Promised Land.*

The March of the *Greek* Army out of *Asia*, under the Conduct of *Xenophon*, after the Death of *Cyrus*, is look'd upon as a thing scarce to be equalled in all human Story, tho' that whole Expedition was but for one Year, and three Months; and the Difficulties they met with were nothing, in comparison of those that beset the *Israelites* on every side, *in that great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought*, Deut. viii. 15. *A land of deserts,*

[n] Jo. Chrys. Magnen. de Manna, c. 2.

and

and of pits, of drought, and of the shadow of death; a land that no man passed through, and where no man dwelt, Jer. ii. 6. Nothing but a Power of Miracles could have sustained them; and nothing but the Sense of it could have kept them within any Bounds of Duty and Obedience.

We see how froward and rebellious they were upon all occasions, notwithstanding the wonderful Power and Presence of God continually manifest amongst them; they would have been content with the *Ægyptian Slavery*, and the *Ægyptian Gods* too, rather than endure the Hardships of the Wilderness. *Moses* complains, that they were *almost ready to stone him*, Exod. xvii. 4. And out of despondency, pray'd, that God would *kill him out of hand*, rather than lay so great a Burthen upon him: *And Moses said, The people amongst whom I am, are six hundred thousand footmen: and thou hast said, I will give them flesh, that they may eat a whole month. Shall the flocks and the herds be slain for them, to suffice them? Or shall all the fish of the sea be gathered together for them, to suffice them?* Num. xi. 15, 21, 22. Whoever can believe, that *Moses*, by his own Skill and Management, could lead such a Multitude through such a Wilderness, so many Years Journey, can, it seems, believe any thing rather than the Scriptures; for this is one of the most incredible things that can be conceived; but it is not in the least incredible, that he might do it by the Divine Power and Assistance.

The *Children of Israel* tempted God *ten times*, by their Murmurings, and their Distrust of his Power and care over them, *Num.* xiv. 22. For which, many of them were punished with Death; 'till at last, the whole Number of Men that were Twenty Years old and upwards, had this Judgment denounc'd against them, That, for their Murmurings, but two of them, by Name *Caleb* the Son of *Jephuneth*, and *Joshua* the Son of *Nun*, should be suffer'd to enter into the *Promised Land*, and the rest should all die in the Wilder-

 ness;

ness; but that after Forty Years wandering in the Wilderness, their Children should be brought in to possess it: *I the Lord have said, I will surely do it unto all this evil congregation, that are gathered together against me: in this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there shall they die*, Num. xiv. 35. And the Men who were sent out to search the Land, and brought the evil Report upon it, died forthwith *by the plague, before the Lord*, ℣ 37. And these Men were the Heads of the *Children of Israel*, a Man of every Tribe being chosen out, *every one a Ruler amongst them*, chap. xiii. 2, 3. And but two of them agreed in giving the true Account of the Land; so great an Aversion they had to proceed any farther in their Way thither: *And all the congregation lifted up their voice and cried: and the people wept that night. And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses, and against Aaron: and the whole congregation said unto them, Would God that we had died in the land of Ægypt, or would God we had died in this wilderness. And wherefore hath the Lord brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey? Were it not better for us to return into Ægypt? And they said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return into Ægypt.* And all the Congregation were for stoning *Joshua* and *Caleb*, if they had not been hindered by *the glory of the Lord appearing in the tabernacle of the congregation, before all the children of Israel*, Numb. xiv. 1, 2, 3, 4, 10. Now, upon so general a Defection, to pronounce peremptorily, that but Two by Name, of so many Thousands should inherit the Land of Promise, and that all the rest should die in that very Wilderness which they complained so much of; and that no less than Forty Years were to be spent in that wandering Condition, of which they were already so weary: This is such a Method of quelling so general a Discontent and Mutiny, as never was heard of before nor since, and which could proceed from nothing less than a Wisdom

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and Authority which could check and controul the most combined and inveterate Perverseness of Men; and a Power which struck the Spreaders of this false Report with immediate Death, before their Eyes, for an Example of that Vengeance which they must all expect would fall upon them, sooner or later, within the Space of Forty Years. So that hereby was taken off all Prospect of Advantage, and all Hopes of any Reward for what they now with so much Regret and Impatience underwent; and from henceforth they were led merely by Conviction of the Divine Power and Presence amongst them, and of the Terrors of those Judgments, which, in all Revolts, seized upon the Disobedient. And now being restless and uneasy in their present Condition, and past all Hopes of remedying it, like desperate Men, they were, upon every little Occasion, thrown into violent Commotions; but were as soon controuled and appeased by visible Judgments upon the chief Authors of them.

For when we read, soon after, that a Rebellion was rais'd against *Moses*, by *Korah*, *Dathan*, and *Abiram*; God gave such evident Tokens of that Authority which he had invested him withal, and so signally manifested, that what he had done amongst them, was by his Power and Commission, that it was impossible for any of them to be deceived in it, or to doubt of it. Though the Truth of it is, they had never from the very first doubted of God's Power amongst them, but were acted now with a Spirit of Rage and Despair, like the Men described by the Prophet, *fretting themselves, and cursing their king, and their God, and looking upwards*, Isa. viii. 21. *Korah*, of the Tribe of *Levi*; and *Dathan*, and *Abiram*, and *On*, of the Tribe of *Reuben*, being Principal and Leading Men of these two Tribes, with *Two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown, gathered themselves together against Moses and Aaron*, charging them, That they *took too much upon them*. And

to clear himself of this Accusation, *Moses* implore God to vindicate his Innocency, before all the People; and, by Agreement, *Korah* and *Aaron* appear'd before the Lord, with Censers in their Hands, and Two hundred and fifty Men besides, with their Censers likewise. *Korah*, at the Time appointed, gathered all the Congregation against *Moses* and *Aaron*, unto the Door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation. So that here was the most solemn Appearance of the whole People, who had entertained great Jealousies against *Moses* and *Aaron*, and were now met together, to see whether they could give sufficient Proof of their Authority, which they challenged over them. The Time and Place was appointed, and they came inclined and prepared to receive any farther ill Impressions concerning *Moses* and *Aaron*, if they could not have made out their Pretensions, in the most remarkable and astonishing Manner, to the utter Confusion of all their Enemies. First, *the glory of the Lord appeared unto all the congregation*; and then *Moses*, at God's Command, charges the Congregation to depart from the Tabernacles of *Korah*, *Dathan*, and *Abiram*, and declares, *Hereby ye shall know that the Lord hath sent me to do all these works: for I have not done them of mine own mind. If these men die the common death of all men, or if they be visited after the visitation of all men; then the Lord hath not sent me. But if the Lord make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth, and swallow them up, with all that appertain unto them, and they go down quick into the pit; then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the Lord. And it came to pass, as he had made an end of speaking all these words, that the ground clave asunder that was under them: And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods: they, and all that appertained to them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them: and they perished from among the congregation. And all Israel that*

were

were round about them, fled at the cry of them: for they said, Lest the earth swallow us up also. And there came out a fire from the Lord, and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense, Numb. xvi.

Thus *Moses* vindicated himself, and proved his Divine Mission and Authority in such a Manner, as it was impossible but that the whole People of *Israel* must be convinced of it: They were very suspicious and jealous of him, tho' they had had so much Experience of his Favour with God, and of all his mighty Works done in the midst of them: But when this dreadful Vengeance fell upon his Enemies, before the whole Congregation, who were met together on purpose to see whether God would declare himself for him; when the Earth divided itself to swallow some of these Men, and a Fire from Heaven devoured others, there was not a Man of all the Congregation but must be an Eye-witness to this Judgment; and there could be no Deceit nor Mistake in a Thing of this Nature: For Men may as well doubt, whether those whom they see live, are alive, as whether those whom they see taken away by so terrible and so visible a Death, are dead; and unless they can know this, there can be no Knowledge nor Proof of any Thing. They saw the Earth first divide itself, and then close itself again upon these wicked Men; they saw them go down alive into the Pit; they heard the Cry of them, and fled away for Fear: And they saw besides a Fire from the Lord consume no fewer than Two hundred and fifty Men, and these the Men that offer'd Incense, in Opposition to *Aaron*; *Princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown*, whose Death was very remarkable, upon the account of their Persons, as well as for the Manner of it. So many Men of that Rank and Character being taken away at once, was a Thing that would have been much observed, and strictly enquired into, if they had fallen by any other Death: But their dying in this Manner, was

so wonderful, and so plain a Declaration of the Divine Justice, that it could neither be unknown nor forgotten by any Man in the whole Congregation.

Yet their Discontents against *Moses* still continued; for he and *Aaron* were charged with *killing the people of the Lord*, ℣ 41. and *the congregation was gathered against Moses and against Aaron: And behold, the cloud covered the tabernacle of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord appeared.* And God's Wrath was so hot against the People, for their Stubbornes and Disobedience, that notwithstanding the Intercession of *Moses* and *Aaron* in their behalf, a Plague from the Lord raged so much amongst them, that *they that died in the plague were fourteen thousand and seven hundred, besides them that died about the matter of Korah*, ℣ 49. And there were, probably, many Families in every Tribe, which bore the Marks of God's Displeasure, and of the Truth of *Moses* his Mission: and then *Aaron*'s Rod alone blossom'd, of all the Rods of the Twelve Tribes: But by this time the People were weary of their contumacy, and cried out, *Behold, we die, we perish, we all perish: Shall we be consumed with dying?* Num. xvii. 12, 13. And thus was an end put to a Sedition, which was the greatest and the most dangerous, as *Josephus* well observes, that was ever known among any People; and such, as that so dreadful a Succession of Miracles was necessary to deliver *Moses* out of it. I would know of the greatest Infidel, whether if he had lived at that time, and had been in the Wilderness with *Moses*, and had been of *Korah*'s Conspiracy, (as it is most likely he would have been) I would know of him, I say, whether he could have done any thing more, to put *Moses* upon the utmost Trial of his Power and Authority received from God, than these rebellious *Israelites* did? And if he could not, (as he must needs confess he could not) then he ought to be satisfied in the Authority of *Moses*, as they themselves afterwards were, unless he has an Ambition

bition to shew, that some *Christians* can be more refractory than *Jews*.

Yet again, when they wanted Water, the People quarell'd with *Moses*, and said, *Would God that we had died when our brethren died before the Lord.* And *Moses* brought Water out of the Rock, before the whole Congregation, in so great Plenty, that the whole People and their Cattel, just ready to perish with Thirst, were satisfied with it, *Numb.* xx. 3, 10. At another time, after a signal Victory over the *Canaanites* they made the same Complaints again; and for their Murmurings, were stung by fiery Serpents, and many died; till a Brazen Serpent being erected, as many as looked on it, were miraculously cured, *Numb.* xxi. 6.

And if the delivering the Law in so conspicuous and wonderful a Manner; if so remarkable Judgments upon those that questioned and opposed *Moses*'s Authority, and that transgressed his Law, by committing Idolatry; if a continual Course of Miracles, for Forty Years, done before the Eyes, and obvious to every Sense of so many thousands of People, be not a plain Demonstration, that the Matter of Fact, in all the Circumstances of it necessary to prove *Moses* to have acted by God's immediate Authority and Commission, was at first sufficiently attested; it is impossible that any Thing can be certainly testified.

We see how impossible it was for *Moses* to impose upon the People of *Israel* in Things of this Nature; if he could have been so far forsaken of all Reason and common Sense, as to hope to do it. But if he had designed to put any Deceit upon them, he would certainly have taken another Course; he would have done his Miracles privately, and but seldom, not in the midst of all the People, for forty Years together: He would never have made two Nations, at the first, Witnesses to them; and then have proceeded in such a Manner, as that every Man among the *Israelites* must have known them to be false, if they had been

so; he would have chosen such Instances to shew his Miracles in, as should have provoked no body; not such as must have enraged the whole People against him, by the death of so many thousands, so often put to death, if they had been slain by any other means than by the Almighty Hand of God. And indeed, what could destroy so many, so irresistibly, so suddenly and visibly, but the Divine Power? And what could be the Design and Intent of such Miracles, but to fulfil the Will of God, and make his Power to be known, and his Authority acknowledged, in the Laws which were delivered in his Name, and which were so often affronted and transgressed by these Sinners, against their own Souls? At their going out of *Ægypt*, by a miraculous Providence, there was *not one feeble Person among their tribes*; but upon their Trangressions, they were punished by Diseases as miraculous.

We have other Evidence (as I have before observed) that *Moses* had no design to delude the People of *Israel*, from the Meekness of his Disposition, from his discovering his own Faults and Infirmities in his Writings, and from his not advancing his Family, but leaving his Posterity in a private Condition, and putting the Government into the Hands of *Joshua*, one of the Tribe of *Ephraim*. But when all the People of *Israel* were Witnesses to so many Miracles wrought by him, and particularly to so strange a Judgment as the cleaving asunder of the Earth, and the Fire and Plague by which so many thousands perished; we need not insist upon any other Proof, to shew that the miraculous Power and Divine Authority by which *Moses* acted and wrote, was as well attested, and as fully known to the whole People of *Israel*, as it is possible for any Matter of Fact to be known to any single Person.

2. Having shewn, That the Matters of Fact and Miracles contained in the Books of *Moses*, as they are related

related to have been done, were at first sufficiently attested; and that, if we may credit that Relation, all the Miracles there mention'd were certainly wrought by him; since they are of that Nature, that the People of *Israel* could not be deceived in them: I now proceed to shew, That the Relations there set down, are a true Account of those things, and such as we may depend upon. For if these Matters of Fact or Miracles are either feigned or falsified, this must be done either in *Moses*'s time, or afterwards; and if in his time, then either by *Moses* and *Aaron*, with others who were concerned in carrying on the Design, or by the whole People of *Israel* together. And if it were done after *Moses*'s Death, then again it must be done either by some particular Man, or by the Contrivance of some few or more together; or it must have been by the joint Knowledge and Consent of the whole Nation. I will therefore prove, (1.) That the Miracles could not be feigned by *Moses* and *Aaron*, and others concerned with them in carrying on such a Design. (2.) That the Miracles could not be feigned, nor the Books of *Moses* invented or falsified by any particular Man, or by any Confederacy or Combination of Men, after the Death of *Moses*. (3.) That the Miracles could not be feigned, nor the Books invented or falsified by the joint Consent of the whole Nation, either in *Moses*'s time, or after it.

(1.) These Things could not be feigned by *Moses* and *Aaron*, and others concerned with them in carrying on such a Design. It is plain, that they could never invent such an Account as that of their miraculous Escape out of *Ægypt*, and their Travelling in the Wilderness, under the conduct and support of the same miraculous Power, and then impose it upon the People of *Israel* for Truth. For the People are supposed to be chiefly concerned in the whole Relation. *Moses* appeals to their own Sense and Experience; *The Lord made not this covenant with our fathers, but*

with us, even with us, who are all of us here alive this day, Deut. v. 3. *And know you this day: for I speak not with your children which have not known, and which have not seen the chastisement of the Lord your God, his greatness, his mighty hand, and his stretched-out arm, and his miracles, and his acts which he did in the midst of Ægypt, unto Pharaoh the King of Ægypt, and unto all his land; and what he did unto the army of Ægypt, unto their horses, and to their chariots, how he made the water of the Red-sea to over-flow them as they pursued after you, and how the Lord hath destroyed them unto this day; and what he did unto you in the wilderness, until ye came into this place; and what he did unto Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab the son of Reuben; how the earth opened her mouth and swallowed them up, and their households, and their tents, and all their substance that was in their possession in the midst of all Israel: But your eyes have seen all the great acts of the Lord, which he did*, Deut. xi. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. Here is a Recapitulation of all the Miracles that had been wrought, with all Appeal to their Senses for the Truth of them. And *Moses* would never have made such Appeals as these, if they could possibly have disproved him; they could never be persuaded that they came out of *Ægypt*, after so many Plagues inflicted upon the *Ægyptians*, to procure their Deliverance, if there had been no such thing; or that they were so long time in the Wilderness, and that so many and so great Miracles were wrought in their sight, if they had never been done before them. Though Men may, perhaps, be persuaded to believe, that their Ancestors, a long time ago, saw and heard things which they never saw nor heard; yet a whole Nation was never supposed to have been persuaded out of their Senses at once: And *Moses* could not attempt to make so many Men believe what they must all have known to have been false, as well as himself, if it had been so; but he would have laid the Scene at a greater distance of time, and not have-

have brought those in as chiefly concerned in the whole Business, who were then alive, and present, to convince him of Falsehood: And therefore, if the Particulars set down in the *Pentateuch* be false, and as ancient as *Moses*'s Time, they must be invented with the Knowledge, and received by the Consent of the whole Nation. For *Moses* and *Aaron* could never so far delude so many Thousands, as to make them believe such Variety of Matter of Fact, in so many and so wonderful Instances set forth, and with such notorious Circumstances, and appeal to the Senses of those whom they deceived, whether they had not seen and perceived, and had the Experience of what had been done for so many Years, if it had been all but Fiction.

(2.) The Miracles could not be feign'd, nor the Books of *Moses* invented or falsified by any particular Man, or by any Confederacy or Combination of Men, after the Death of *Moses*. If the Miracles were feigned after the Death of *Moses*, either the Laws must likewise be invented or altered after his Death, and the Miracles inserted to procure them Authority; or the Laws remained as they had been deliver'd by him, and the Miracles only were added. For the Books of *Moses* may be consider'd, either as containing the Laws delivered by him, or as relating the Miracles by which these Laws were ratified and established; in each of which Respects, there could be no Forgery or Falsification. For,

First, The Laws themselves could not be invented, nor altered or falsified: Because the whole *Jewish* State and Policy was founded upon them, and could not subsist without them; and therefore they must be as ancient as the *Jewish* Government, which is confess'd on all Hands to have been first erected by *Moses*. For not only their Religious Worship, but their Civil Rights and Interests, depended entirely upon the Laws of *Moses*; their Publick Proceedings, and their Private Dealings one with another, were all to be regulated

lated and governed by these Laws: And when any Laws are brought into constant Use and Practice in any Nation, it is ridiculous to imagine that they can be altered and falsified, and a new System of Laws introduced instead of them, without the knowledge of the People governed by them, or any Remembrances of it left amongst them. No material Alterations can be made in Laws which are of continual Use, and which concern every Man's Interest, but they must be taken notice of and discovered by such as shall find themselves aggrieved by such Alterations. But this was less practicable amongst the *Jews*, than amongst any other People.

(1.) Because the Distinction of their Tribes, and the Genealogies which were kept of every Family, made them have a more separate and distinct Interest in every Tribe, and a more exact Account of Times, and perfect Knowledge of Things in every Family; and therefore they were not so capable of being imposed upon in Things of this nature, as the People of other Nations might be, where Marriages and Inheritances are promiscuous, and no occasion is given for the like Emulation and Watchfulness over one another, and where no such Remembrances and Notices of the Transactions of Affairs are to be consulted by any one of every private Family: *In the wilderness of Sinai, on the first day of the second month, in the second Year after they were come out of the land of Ægypt, Moses and Aaron* assembled *all the congregation together, and they declared their pedigrees after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of their names, from twenty years old and upwards, by their poll*, Num. i. 1, 18. And this was done again in the *Plains of Moab*, at the end of Forty Years, *chap.* xxvi. And these Genealogies were preserv'd, not only during the Captivity, *Ezra* vii. and down to the Reign of *Herod*; but even to the time of *Josephus*, who (in his First Book against *Apion*) says, That they had the Gene-

Genealogies of their Priests then still extant for Two thousand Years; and in the Account of his own Life, he transcribes his Pedigree from the Publick Registers.

By which means it came to pass, that every Tribe had a kind of separate Interest; which was the occasion of *Korah*'s Sedition against *Moses*, who was probably one of the First-born of the Tribe of *Levi*. His Confederates, *Dathan*, *Abiram*, and *On*, were of the Tribe of *Reuben*. [o] The Priests, *Exod.* xix. 22. and xxiv. 5. before the Consecration of *Aaron* and his Sons, could be no other than the First-born. And the Jealousy and Envy, which the Tribe of *Levi*, as well as the other Tribes, had against *Aaron*, because the Priesthood was confined to his Family, was the cause of that Rebellion: *The Lord* (says *Moses* to *Korah*) *hath brought thee near to him, and all thy brethren the sons of Levi; and seek ye the priesthood also? For which cause both thou and thy company are gathered together against the Lord? And what is Aaron, that ye murmur against him?* Num. xvi. 10, 11. And every Man amongst their Tribes might certainly hereby know how many Generations he was removed from those who first took possession of the *Land of Promise*; and might find the Names of his Ancestors registred, who were in the Wilderness with *Moses*, or came with *Joshua* over *Jordan*. And this must make the Memory of their Ancestors more dear and familiar to them; and it must make them have a greater Regard for any thing they had left behind them, especially for a Book upon which their Rights of Inheritance, and the Title they had to all they enjoy'd, depended: This was the Deed by which they held their Estates; and

[o] *Et misit primogenitos filiorum Israel.*] *Quoniam usque ad illam horam fuit cultus inter Primogenitos: hactenus enim non factum erat Tabernaculum fœderis, & hactenus non datum erat sacerdotium Aharoni, & obtuleruut holocausta & oblationes sanctas coram Domino.* Targ. Jonath. B. Uziel. in Exod. xxiv. 5.

the

the Last Will and Testament, as it were, of their Ancestors, amongst whom the Land was divided. But it is certain, Men are more careful of nothing, than of the Writings by which they enjoy their Estates; and there is no great Danger, when a Will is once come to the Hands of the right Heir, that it will be lost or falsified, to his Prejudice: But if the Books of *Moses* were altered, it must be upon the Account of some Advantage to such as must be supposed to make the Alterations; and consequently, to the Disadvantage of others, who therefore would have found themselves concern'd to oppose such Alterations. But as the Books of *Moses* were in the Nature of a Deed of Settlement, to every Tribe and Family; so they were a Law too, which all were oblig'd to know and observe, under the severest Penalties: And being so generally known, and universally practised, it could no more be falsified at any Time since its first Promulgation, than it could be now at this Day. For,

2. Another Thing which made the People of *Israel* less capable of being imposed upon in this Matter, was, That they were by their Laws themselves obliged to the constant Study of them; they were to teach them their Children, and to be continually discoursing and meditating on them; to *bind them for a sign upon their hand, that they might be as frontlets between their eyes*; to *teach them their children, speaking of them when they sate in their houses, and when they walked by the way, when they lay down, and when they rose up*; to *write them upon the door-posts of their houses, and upon their gates*, Deut. xi. 18, 19, 20. Nothing was to be more notorious and familiar to them, and accordingly they were perfectly acquainted with them, and (as *Josephus* says) knew them as well as they did their own Names; they had them constantly in their Mouths, and Thousands have died in Defence of them, and could by no Menaces or Torments be brought

brought to forsake or renounce them. And to this end, One Day in Seven was by *Moses*'s Law set apart for the learning and understanding of it. The *Jews* have a Tradition, That *Moses* appointed the Law to be read thrice every Week in their publick Assemblies: And *Grotius* * is of this Opinion. However, the Scripture informs us, that *Moses, of old time, had in every city them that preached him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath-day*, Act. xv. 21. It is indeed the common Opinion, That there were no Synagogues before the Captivity: But then, by *Synagogues*, must be understood Places of Judicature, rather than of Divine Worship: For the Courts of Judicature were anciently held in the Gates of Cities, not in any Places peculiarly assign'd for that Use, *Amos* v. 12, 15. But there is no Reason to question but the *Jews* had their *Proseucha*'s, or Places of Prayer, from the Beginning; since it is incredible, that those who lived at a great Distance, and could not come to *Jerusalem* on the *Sabbath-days*, and other times of Divine Worship, (besides the three great Festivals, when all their Males were bound to be at *Jerusalem*) should not assemble for the Worship of God in the Places where they dwelt; nay, they were by an express Law obliged to it on the *Sabbaths: The seventh day is the sabbath of rest, an holy convocation; ye shall do no work therein; it is the sabbath of the Lord in all your dwellings*, Levit. xxiii. 3. They must therefore have Places in all their Dwellings to resort to, where they held their Convocations or Assemblies; which is proved out of the *Jewish* Writers, by a very learned † Author. And to these Assemblies they went on the *New Moons*, as well as on the *Sabbaths*, 2 Kings iv. 23. Which made the *Psalmist* lament, that the Enemy had *burnt up all* ‖ *the synagogues of God in the land*, Psal. lxxiv. 8.

* Grot. ad Matt. xv. 2. † Thorndyke's *Relig. Assemb.* c. 2, 3.

‖ Ἐνεπρησας πασας συναγωγας ἰσχυος ἐπι της γης. Aquila. Incenderunt omnes Synagogas Dei fortis in Terra.

called

called the Houses of God, *Psal.* xxxiii. 12. And *Jeremiah*, *that the Lord had destroyed his places of assembly*, Lam. ii. 6. And being met together, there is as little doubt to be made but that they read the Law; which was to be read by them in their Families, and much more in their publick Assemblies, on their solemn Days of Divine Worship. The Books of *Moses* therefore were read in their Synagogues, in every City, ἐκ γενεων ἀρχαιων, *from ancient Generations*, *or* from the first Settlement of the *Children of Israel* in the Land of *Canaan*. Ἀφ' ἡμερων ἀρχαιων, *Acts* xv. 7. denotes the beginning of the Gospel Dispensation towards the *Gentiles*. Thus St. *James* explains those Words of St. *Peter*, ℣ 14. Συμεων ἐξηγησατο καθως πρωτον ὁ Θεος ἐπεσκεψατο λαβειν ἐξ ἐθνων λαον ἐπι τῳ ὀνοματι αὐτου. And therefore his own Words, ℣ 21. must be understood so, as to extend to the Age in which *Moses* lived[q]. And thus the Books of *Moses* still are read by the [r] *Samaritans*, as well as by the *Jews*; which shews, that this was a Custom ever observ'd, not only before the Captivity, but before the Separation of the Ten Tribes.

And then, at the end of every seven Years, the Law was read in the most publick and solemn manner, in the Solemnity of the *Year of Release*, in the *Feast of Tabernacles*. *Moses* wrote a Book of the Law, and commanded it to be put in the side of the Ark, *Deut.* xxxi. 26. as the Two Tables of Stone were put into the Ark it self, *chap.* x. 5. And this he deliver'd to the Priests, and to all the Elders of *Israel*, and *commanded them*, *saying*, *At the end of every seven years*, *in the solemnity of the year of Release*, *in the feast of tabernacles*, *when all Israel is come to appear before the Lord thy God*, *in the place which he shall choose: thou*

[q] Ἐξ ἀρχαιων χρονων, Polycarp. Ep. ad Philip. c. 1. signifies, *from the first Propagation of the Gospel, or the first Conversion of the* Philippians.

[r] Samaritan. ad Jos. Scalig. Ep. Antiq. Eccl. Oriental p. 120.

shalt

shalt read this law before all Israel, in their hearing. Gather the people together, men and women, and children, and thy stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the Lord your God, and observe to do all the words of this law: And that their children which have not known any thing, may hear and learn to fear the Lord your God, as long as ye live in the land whither ye go over Jordan to possess it, Deut. xxxi. 10, 11, 12, 13. How is it possible, that any more effectual care could have been taken to secure a Law from being deprav'd and alter'd by Impostures? Every seventh Day, at least, was set apart for the reading and learning it, in their several Tribes, throughout all the Land; and then once in seven years it was read at a publick and solemn Feast, when they were all obliged to go up to *Jerusalem.* And for this purpose, *Moses* wrote a Book of the Law, which was put in the side of the Ark, that it might be there for a Testimony against them, if they should transgress it, much more, if they should make any Alterations in it.

And out of this Book the King was to write him a Copy of the Law, *Deut.* xvii. 18. And this Book of the Law was found by *Hilkiah* the High-Priest, in the House of the Lord, 2 *Chron.* xxxiv. 14. 2 *Kings* xxii. 8. For after all that the wicked and idolatrous Kings could do to suppress the Law of *Moses*, and draw aside the People to Idolatry, the Authentick Book of the Law written by *Moses* himself, was still preserv'd in *Josiah*'s time, besides the several Copies which must be dispers'd throughout the Land, for the use of their Synagogues, and those which must be remaining in the hands of the Prophets, and other pious Men.

And there is little reason to doubt, but that this very Book written by *Moses*, was preserv'd during the Captivity, and was that Book which *Ezra* read to the People. It is by no means credible, that the Prophets would suffer that Book to be lost, much less

that they would suffer all the Copies generally to be lost or corrupted; which indeed, considering the Number, was hardly possible. Is it probable that *Jeremiah* would use that Favour which he had with *Nebuchadnezzar*, to any other Purpose, rather than for the Preservation of the Book of the Law? This Use [s] *Josephus* made of his Interest with *Titus*, to preserve the Holy Scriptures. And the [t] *Jews* say, that both the Tabernacle and the Ark were secured by *Jeremiah*, in the burning of the Temple, at the Time of their Captivity, and consequently the Law was preserv'd, which was kept in the Side of the Ark; but it is much more probable that the Book of their Law was secur'd, than the Ark itself, that being both more easily convey'd away, and not so tempting a Prey to the Enemy. We find the Law cited in the Time of the Captivity, by *Daniel*, Dan. ix. 11. by *Nehemiah*, Nehem. i. 8, 9. and in *Tobit*, who belonged to the Ten Tribes, *Tob.* vi. 12. and vii. 13.

And it is not to be doubted, but that these and other pious Men had Copies of it by them, and were very careful to preserve them. *Maimonides* [u] says, that *Moses* himself wrote out Twelve Books of the Law, one for each Tribe, besides that which was laid up in the Side of the Ark; and the Rabbins teach, that every one is obliged to have a Copy of the *Pentateuch* by him: And *Ezra* and *Nehemiah* [w] are said to have brought Three hundred Books of the Law into the Congregation assembled at their Return from Captivity. It is certain, there were Scribes of the Law, before the Captivity, and in the Time of it, *Jer.* viii. 8. *Ezra* is styled *a ready Scribe in the Law of Moses*; and *the Scribe, even a Scribe of the words of the commandments of the Lord, and of his statutes to Israel.*

[s] Joseph. Vit. sub fin. [t] 2 Maccab. ii. 5.
[u] Maimon. Præf. in Seder. Zeraim. p. 3.
[w] Druf. de Trib. Sect. l. 3. c. 11. Pirke Rab. Eliesr. c. 38. p. 101.

And

And by *Artaxerxes*, in his Letter, he is called a *Scribe of the law of the God of heaven*, Ezra, vii. 6, 11, 12. By which it appears, that there were Scribes of the Law during the Captivity, who were known by this solemn Style and Character, and whose Care and Employment it was, to study and write over the Law, of whom *Ezra* was the Principal at the Time of their Return.

It is most probable then, that the Book of the Law was preserv'd in *Moses*'s own Hand, till the coming of the *Jews* from *Babylon*; besides the Copies that were preserv'd in the Hands of *Daniel*, *Nehemiah*, *Ezra*, *Zechariah*, and the other Prophets, who were not only of unquestionable Integrity, but wrote themselves by Divine Inspiration.

3. Nothing is more expresly forbidden in the Books of *Moses*, than all Fraud and Deceit; and it cannot reasonably be suspected, that any Man would be guilty of a Fraud of the highest Nature imaginable, to introduce or establish a Law that forbids it. *Moses* had forewarned them against all such Practices, both in his Laws in general, and by an expres Prohibition: *Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it*, Deut. iv. 2. And all who had any Regard to the Observation of his Laws, would observe this, as well as other Parts of it; for this preserv'd the Authority of all the rest inviolable: And if they had had no Regard to the Law, but had altered it as they pleased, they would certainly have made such Alterations as would have gratified the People, and would have taken great care to leave nothing which might give Offence; but the Laws of *Moses* are such, as that without a Divine Authority to enforce them, they would never have been complied with, but would have been grievous to a less suspicious and impatient People than the *Jews* were. If it be said, That the Prohibition against Alterations might be added amongst other things; there

is no ground of Probability for it, but so much odds against it, that a Man might as well suspect that any other Passage in the whole five Books had been forged, as to pitch upon that particular Verse, and say that it is not genuine. Besides, why should Impostors insert such a Clause as would hinder them from changing any thing in the Law ever after? Why should they not rather reserve to themselves a Liberty of changing and adding as often as they thought fit?

Secondly, As the Laws themselves could not be invented nor alter'd after *Moses*'s time; so neither could the Account of the Miracles wrought by him, be inserted after his Death, by any particular Man, nor by any Confederacy or Combination of Men whatsoever. For if the Miracles, by which the Law is supposed to be confirm'd, were afterwards inserted, they must be intended as a Sanction, to give Authority to it, and keep the People in awe, when they were become uneasie and disobedient under the Government of those Laws. But it must needs be much more difficult to introduce Laws at first, than to govern a People by them, after they have been once introduc'd, and are settl'd and receiv'd amongst them. Indeed, it is incredible, how Laws, so little favourable to the Ease or Advantage of a People, which were so expensive and burthensome in their Ceremonies, and which were purposely design'd, in many things, to be contrary to the Customs of all the Nations round about them, and to the Customs which they had been themselves acquainted with in *Ægypt*, in so many Instances, could be at first introduced, but by Miracle: But if they could have been once introduced without Miracles, there is no reason to think, but that when the People were used and accustom'd to them, there would have been no need of any Pretence of Miracles, to keep them in obedience to them; and as little reason there is to imagine that they would have been over-aw'd by a Report of Miracles, which must be suppos'd never to have

h ve been heard of, 'till the People gave occasion for the Invention of them, by their Disobedience.

The Books of *Moses* were read (as I have shewn) in the Synagogues, or Religious Assemblies, in the several Tribes, at least every *Sabbath-day*, and were appointed to be solemnly read, in the audience of all the People, at the *Feast of Tabernacles*, every seven Years: and if they had had no Knowledge of the Law of *Moses*, but from the Rehearsal of it at the *Feast of Tabernacles*; yet can we conceive, that the Body of the *Jewish* Nation should be so stupid and forgetful, as not to remember when these Miracles must be supposed to be first read to them, that they had never heard them before? But how impossible is it, that they should be thus imposed upon, when they heard the Books of *Moses* read every Week to them, and had them besides in their own keeping, to read them at their leisure? The Miracles now make up great part of the Books of *Moses*; they are every where interspers'd and intermix'd, throughout the History; and they are of such a nature, as is most apt to make Impression upon the Memories of Men: And can we imagine, that Miracles, so often repeated, and every where inculcated, could be inserted by any Contrivance, and imposed upon a People who were all wont to hear the Law publickly read in a solemn Assembly once every Seven Years, and heard it read in their Synagogues besides every Seventh Day? Would they not be infinitely surpriz'd, the first time they heard the Relation of the Plagues inflicted on the *Ægyptians*, of the Judgment upon *Korah* and his Company, and of the miraculous Punishments which befel the Idolatrous and Disobedient in the Wilderness? Would they not soon have found out so obvious a Deceit, as this must have been, if it had been one? If we can think that such Insertions could pass without discovery; why may we not as well believe too, that as many more might be made now, and not be discover'd? Would

not the whole Body of the People have been able to testify that all this was conterfeited, and inserted into the Law; for no such Thing was read to them in their Synagogues upon the *Sabbaths*, nor had been read at the end of the last Seven Years, but it was all now added to terrify them, and keep them from following the Customs of other Nations? Would not this have been the worst Contrivance that could have been thought of, to keep a People in Awe, to tell them of such Things as every Man of them could disprove, that was of Age, and had but Understanding and Memory enough to know what he had heard so often read before, and to distinguish it from such Things as are so remarkable, that they could hardly escape any one's Memory, who had ever heard of them?

They had Books of the Law for their private reading; and besides their reading of it in their Weekly Assemblies, they had a solemn Publication and Proclamation of their Law once every Seven Years, as it were purposely to prevent any Design of falsifying it: And to have read any Thing so remarkable, as the Miracles of *Moses* are, in all their Circumstances, so often repeated and insisted upon, if the People had not found them in their own Books, and had not been used to hear them read to them, from the Time of the giving the Law by *Moses*, had been only for the Projectors to proclaim themselves Impostors, but could never have deceived any Man. How impossible any Contrivance of this Nature would have been among a People so suspicious and turbulent as the *Jews*, we may perceive from what happen'd to an [x] *African* Bishop who had a Design to introduce the Translation of St. *Jerom* into his Church. For when his People observed *Hedera* to be read for *Cucurbita*, that is, *Ivy* instead of *Gourd*, *Jonah* iv. they were in such an Uproar on the Alteration of this one Word, in a disputable Case, and of

[x] Augustin. ad Hieronym. Ep.

little-

little or no Consequence, that he was forc'd to continue the former Reading.

And besides the Care that was taken for the Preservation of the Books of the Law, there were publick Memorials of the principal Miracles enjoin'd; such was the *Feast of the Passover*, in Remembrance of the Angel's passing over the *Israelites*, when he slew the First-born of the *Ægyptians*; and the *Feast of Tabernacles*, in Remembrance of their dwelling in Tents in the Wilderness; such was the Confession and Commemoration of those that offered the First-fruits, setting forth the Mercies of God, in bringing them out of the Land of *Ægypt with a mighty hand, and with an out-stretched arm, and with great terribleness, and with signs, and with wonders*, Deut.xxvi. 8. and such were the *Brazen Serpent*, the *Ark*, and the *Tabernacle:* These were Things seen and observed, or known by all; and they could not be introduced after *Moses*'s Time, because there could be no Pretence for it; since they who introduced them, must suppose them to have been before, at the very Time when they designed first to introduce them. The *Urim* and *Thummim* was both a constant Miracle, and a constant Attestation to the Law, by which it was ordained. And it appears, that the Priests who were to examine and judge of Leprosy either in Persons or Things, were secured from the Infection of it, though it were infectious to all others: And their constant Service could not be performed without a [y] miraculous Dispensation.

Thus it is evident, That there is all the Proof which it is possible to bring in any Case of this Nature, that the Books of *Moses* could not be falsified by any Man or Party of Men whatsoever; since the Nature and Institution of the Law itself did effectually pro-

[y] *Vid.* Lightfoot's *Prospect of the Temple*, c. 34. p. 2030.

vide against all Impostures; and the *Jews* had all the assurance that it is possible for any People to have, that the Books of *Moses* are the same which he wrote and left behind him. And this inspired them with such a zeal for their Law, as to sacrifice their Lives in vindication of it: whereas there was no Book whatsoever, as *Josephus* observes, amongst the *Heathens*, which any Man amongst them would not rather a thousand times see destroyed, though it were in never so much esteem with them, than he would suffer for it: Which shews, that the *Jews* were fully convinced of the Divine Authority of their Law, from all the Evidence above-mentioned; and were persuaded, that it is the same which *Moses* delivered, and left behind him.

(3.) The *Pentateuch* could not be invented nor falsified by the joint Consent of the whole Nation, either in *Moses*'s time, or after it. For how is it possible that such a thing should have been concealed from all other Nations? and, that a whole Nation should know of the Imposture, and no Man ever discover it, nor any Apostate ever divulge it, but they and their Posterity should always profess, that they believed the Law to be revealed to *Moses* by God himself, just as we now have it in the *Pentateuch?* that under all Afflictions and Adversites, they should impute their Sufferings to the violation of the Law; and so many should die, rather than depart from it?

Upon the Revolt of the Ten Tribes, *Jeroboam* would certainly have discover'd it, if he had but suspected any such thing as an Imposture, or could but have hoped to make the People believe that the Laws of *Moses* were not of Divine Institution, but of Humane Invention and Contrivance: but he supposed the Truth of its Divine Original, whilst he tempted the People to the Transgression of it; *Behold thy Gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Ægypt*, 1 Kings xii. 28. he supposes them brought out of the Land

Land of *Ægypt*, and brought out by a Divine Power; and endeavours to persuade them, that the two *Calves* which he had set up in *Dan* and *Bethel*, were the Gods who delivered them, and by whose Authority the Law was given them; and that therefore either of those Places was as proper to sacrifice in, as *Jerusalem:* which however absurd it were, yet he did not think so absurd, as to endeavour to make them believe that their Law it self was no better than an Imposture: he had some hopes to succeed in this Project; and the Event shews, he understood the Temper and Principles of the People he had to deal with; but the other was too gross for him to attempt.

The true Prophets of *Israel* were ever as zealous for the Law of *Moses*, as the Prophets of *Judah*, and the False Prophets of either Kingdom, never durst deny its Authority: these False Prophets affronted and contradicted the Prophets of the Lord, but they ever owned the Law, and pretended to speak in the Name of that God who had deliver'd it to *Moses*.

And this Division of the Ten Tribes made it impossible afterwards for either the Kingdom of *Israel*, or of *Judah*, to make any Alterations in the Books of *Moses*; because there was so great Emulation and Enmities betwixt the two Kingdoms, that they could never have agreed to insert the same Corruptions; and if either of them had attempted such a thing, it would soon have been discovered by the other; and therefore the Agreement of the *Samaritan* with the *Hebrew Pentateuch*, is a plain Argument that they are but different Copies of the same Book, and that it is undoubtedly genuine. The *Children of Israel*, notwithstanding their great proneness to Idolatry, never cast off the Law of *Moses* as they would certainly have done, being so often brought into Bondage by their neighbour Nations, if they had not been well assured of the Authority of that Law which they transgress'd; but they were reduced to the Obedience of the Law,

by the Oppressions of Idolatrous Nations; they hoped for Deliverance upon their Repentance, according to the Promises made in it, and could by no Temptations or Torments be perswaded or forced to renounce it: But the long Captivity in *Babylon* wrought a perfect Cure in the *Jews*, as to their Inclination to Idolatry; which could never have been unless by their own Experience, in seeing the Prophecies fulfilled, and by other Arguments, they had been fully convinced of the Truth of their own Religion beyond all others.

If it had been of their own Invention, the People would have made their Law, in every respect, more favourable to themselves; they would not have clogged it with burthensome Ceremonies, to distinguish themselves from the neighbour Nations, to whose Idolatries they were so long prone, and from which these Ceremonies were designed to restrain them. They who were for a long Time so fond of the Idolatries of the *Heathen*, would never have invented Laws so uneasy to themselves, and so contrary and odious to other Nations; they would never have framed them themselves, and then have pretended a Divine Revelation for those Laws with which they were so little pleased. They would never have exposed themselves to the whole World, through all Ages, as a stubborn and rebellious People, notwithstanding so many and so convincing Miracles so long wrought amongst them. The Miracles which I have mention'd, were most of them Judgments upon the *Israelites*, for their Disobedience; and they would never have set down these Miracles, but would rather have left them out, though they were true, as disgraceful to their Nation. For thus *Josephus* has omitted some things, to avoid the Scandal which, he was aware, would have been given to the *Heathen*, by a full and punctual Relation of the whole History of the *Jews*, as it is described in the Books

of

of *Moſes*. And they could be as little ignorant as *Joſephus*, what would prove diſgraceful to them, and what would make for their Honour and Renown; and when the Deſign of theſe ſuppoſed Forgeries and Falſifications muſt have been to advance the Glory of the People of *Iſrael*, they would never have made ſuch as theſe. No, if they had made any Alterations, it would have been, to ſtrike out thoſe numerous Paſſages which are ſo reproachful to their Nation, and to have inſerted others, which might raiſe the Fame and Glory of Themſelves, and of their Anceſtors; and to have changed thoſe Ceremonies that were ſo burthenſome and ſo ſingular, for thoſe which would have been more eaſy to themſelves, and might have recommended them to the good Opinion and Eſteem of the neighbour Nations. But when ſo refractory a People became ſo zealous for ſuch a Law, ſo uneaſy at firſt, and ſo diſtaſteful to them; it is an undeniable Argument, that they had the greateſt Aſſurance of its Divine Original, and that they would neither falſify it themſelves, nor ſuffer others to falſify it.

The People of *Iſrael* muſt be ſuppoſed to be unanimous to a Man, in the making theſe Laws, if they were of their own making; for if any one had diſſented, he could not fail of Arguments to draw others after him. In making Laws, the Intereſts and Conveniencies of the Law-makers are always the Motives for the enacting them; and beſides the Publick Honour and Welfare of the Nation, which too often are leſs conſidered, the particular Intereſt of every ſingle Man would have made him concern'd to put a Stop to ſuch Laws. No People can be ſuppoſed to conſent to the making Laws, by which they are forbidden to ſow their Land every Seventh Year, and are commanded to leave their Habitations, and to go up to the Capital City, from every Part of their Country, thrice in a Year: No People could agree to enact ſuch Laws

of

of their own Contrivance; because none could subsist in the Observation of them, without a Miracle. How can we conceive it possible for any People to subsist by such Laws, if they had been of their own making? or, that any Nation should agree in the enacting such Laws as must provoke all their neighbour Nations to make War against them? nay, by which they actually declared an irreconcileable War against seven Nations at once? For one Nation to distinguish themselves, by their Laws and Constitutions, from all other People; to lay the very Foundations of their Government, in the Disgrace and Infamy of all their neighbour Nations; to report, that after so many loathsome and grievous Plagues, inflicted upon *Pharaoh* and his People, they came out of *Ægypt*, and at last, by the Destruction of him and his whole Army in the *Red Sea*, made their Escape; and that they forced their Way through all the other Nations that withstood their Passage into *Canaan*, and vanquished and destroyed them as they went: and then to proclaim a sacred War against all the Nations whose Land they were to possess, and many of whose Posterity were remaining to the time of the Captivity; and were sometimes struck with Terror at the Remembrance, which was retained among them, of these Judgments, (1 *Sam.* iv. 8. vi. 6.) but might have been able to confute great part of what the *Israelites* affirmed of themselves, if it had been false, and of a late Invention: For any People, I say, to invent such Accounts of themselves and their Ancestors, and then to make such Laws, and to have the one believed, and the other obeyed, is altogether incredible. When they had enraged all the neighbouring Nations to their Destruction, they obliged themselves, by their Laws, to leave all their Borders naked, thrice every Year, and to give them an opportunity to destroy them; and no People could have lived half an Age in such a Condition, under such Laws, unless they had

had been protected by God himself, the Author of them.

It appears therefore, that as neither *Moses* himself, nor any Party of Men, either in his time, or after it, could either invent, or change and falsifie the Books which are under his Name; so it is still more extravagant, (if possible) to conceit, that the whole People of *Israel* should either in *Moses*'s time, or afterwards, be conscious to such an Imposture; and yet that no Man should ever discover it, but it should to this day be concealed from all other Nations; and that neither at the time of the Division of the Ten Tribes, when *Jeroboam* was forced to set up Altars in other Places, to keep the People from going up to *Jerusalem* to worship, nor upon any other occasion, this Secret, if that may be called so, which must be known to so many Thousands, should ever come to light. Besides that, they could never have invented those Laws, by unanimous Consent amongst themselves, which they were so hardly brought to obey; and if they had not been disobedient, they would never have pretended they were, and have invented Miracles to made it believed; and if they had been never so forward in their Obedience, they could not have lived in the Observation of the Law, without a perpetual Miracle.

If then the Miracles of *Moses*, and consequently the Divine Authority by which he gave his Law to the *Israelites*, be sufficiently attested, supposing the Matters of Fact to be true, which are contained in the *Pentateuch:* And if neither *Moses* himself could feign the Matters of Fact, nor any other Person or Persons, either in his time, or afterwards, could insert them, or change the Law; and the whole Jewish Nation could not at any time conspire in such a Fiction and Imposture: We have all the Assurance that it is possible to have, and all that any sober Man can desire, both of the Truth of the Miracles wrought by

by *Moſes*, and of the Divine Authority of the Books penn'd by him. And it will be found, that after all the Reflections made by Infidels, upon the Credulity, as they eſteem it, of others, there are none ſo credulous as they, for they reject the moſt certain, to believe the moſt incredible Things in the World.

The Divine Miſſion and Authority of *Moſes* being fully proved: From thence it will follow, 1. That God having inſtituted the *Jewiſh* Government, was, in Point both of Wiſdom and Honour, concerned in the Adminiſtration of it, and that a more eſpecial and peculiar Care and Providence muſt be watchful over this *holy Nation*, and *peculiar People*. 2. That whatever befel them, either by Prophecies or by Miracles, and the extraordinary Appointments of God, according to the Revelations made in the Law of *Moſes*, has, beſides its own proper and intrinſick Evidence, the additional Proof of all the Miracles and Prophecies of *Moſes*. So that the Proof of the Divine Authority of *Moſes*'s Books, is at the ſame time a Proof of all the other Books of Scripture, ſo far as they are in the Matter and Subject of them conſequent to theſe. 3. That the *Pentateuch*, and the other Parts of the *Old Teſtament*, (not to mention the *New Teſtament* in this Place) reciprocally prove each other, like the Cauſe and the Effect; the *Pentateuch* being the Cauſe and Foundation of Theſe; and Theſe the Effect and the Conſequence of the *Pentateuch*, and the Fulfilling the ſeveral Predictions of it.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

Of Joshua *and the* Judges, *and of the Miracles and Prophecies under their Government.*

IT is generally agreed, that *Joshua* himself was the Author of the Book under his Name: And some, who are of another Opinion, yet acknowledge that it must be written by his particular Order, in his Life-time, or soon after his Death. The Land was *described by Cities in a Book*, which was brought to *Joshua*, Josh. xviii. 8, 9. The Nature of the Thing it self required, that the Division of the Land of *Canaan* amongst the several Tribes, should forthwith be committed to Writing: For no People can be named, who had the Use of Letters, that trusted the Boundaries of their Lands to Memory; and there is no Delay to be used in such Cases: *Joshua* therefore, who did by Lot set out the Bounds of the Tribes, at the same Time put them down in Writing; which he left upon Record to Posterity, to prevent Disputes, and to be appealed to, in case any Controversy should arise. But the bare Distribution of the Land was not to be transmitted, without an Account of the miraculous Conquest of it, which might dispose them to be contented with their several Lots, and remind them of their Duty, in the Possession and Enjoyment of a Land, in which they were settled by the immediate Hand of God.

The *Book of Joshua* appears to have been written during the Life-time of *Rahab*, Josh. vi. 25. and of *Caleb*, Josh. xiv. 14. and by one who passed over *Jordan* when its Waters were cut off: For none, but one, who had been present, could properly have said, *until we were passed over*, Josh. v. 1. and to have been written (in part at least) by *Joshua* himself, and annexed

nex'd to the Law of *Moses*, chap. xxiv. 26. But the five last Verses, giving an Account of the Death of *Joshua*, and of what followed after it, were added by some of the Prophets, probably by *Samuel*, who, according to the Jewish Tradition, is the Author of the *Book of Judges*, where we find the same things repeated concerning the Death of *Joshua*, Judg. ii. 7.

The *Book of Judges* and [a] *Ruth* are reckon'd by the *Jews* as one Book; and the *Book of Judges* is reckon'd among the Books of the Prophets, *Mat.* ii. 23. *Judg.* xiii. 5. and it seems to be entitled to *Samuel*, Acts iii. 24. where *Samuel* is mention'd as the first of the Prophets, that is, the first Author of the Books written by them: For which reason, he is likewise by the [b] *Jews* accounted the first of the Prophets. That the *Book of Judges* was penn'd before the taking of *Jerusalem* by *David*, we may learn from *Judg.* i. 21.

After the Death of *Moses*, *Joshua* undertakes the Government and Conduct of the People of *Israel*, according to God's Appointment, and his Investiture to it by *Moses*, Num. xxvii. 22. who also foretold the great Success that afterwards attended him, *Deut.* i. 38. and at his first Entrance upon the Government, God gave to him the same Divine Attestation that had before been given to *Moses* in their Passage thro' the *Red-Sea*: *And the Lord said unto Joshua, This day will I begin to magnifie thee in the sight of all Israel, that they may know, that as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee*, Josh. iii. 7. And for a certain Demonstration that *the living God was among them*, and would give them Victory over the Seven Nations, and Possession of their Land, the Priests did, by God's Appointment, bear the Ark before the People: And, according to the express Prediction of *Joshua*, as soon as their Feet *were dipt in the rim of the water*,

[a] Origen. ap. Euseb. Hist. l. 6. c. 25. Hieron. Præf. in lib. Reg.
[b] *F.* Sim. *Suppl. to* Leo *of* Modena, c. 1.

in

in the time of Harvest, when the River *Jordan* is at the highest, and overflows all its Banks, the Waters divided themselves; those above stood on one side in heaps, and those below were cut off and failed, the Priests standing with the Ark, in the midst of the Channel, upon dry Ground, 'till all the People were passed over, and *until every thing was finished that the Lord commanded Joshua to speak unto the People, according to all that Moses commanded Joshua*, Josh. iv. 10. Now, it is an undoubted Tradition amongst the *Jews*, [c] That the Tents of the *Israelites* in the Wilderness contain'd a Square of Twelve Miles, and that the Host took up the same Space whilst they pass'd *Jordan*. However, this is certain, that they kept at the distance of about Two thousand Cubits from the Ark, when it stood in the midst of *Jordan*, Josh. iii. 4. so that the Waters must be withdrawn for many Miles in the Passage of the whole Army over the River, if they pass'd it in a regular March, and in such Order of Battle as to be able to oppose the Enemy; or if they march'd in a narrower Body, they must be so much the longer in their Passage: Which way soever it were, it was a very great and manifest Miracle. The People being all gone over, and every thing perform'd which God had commanded, the Priests with the Ark came out of the Channel of the River, where they had all this while stood, and as soon as their Feet *were lift up unto the dry land*, beyond the Waters which stood then on an heap, and did not flow down as at other times, they resum'd their Course, and *returned to their place, and flowed over all the banks, as they did before*, Josh. iv. 18. And as a Memorial of this Miracle to all Posterity, Twelve Stones were set up in the midst of *Jordan*, *in the place where the feet of the Priests which bare the ark of the covenant stood*, ℣ 8, 9. and Twelve Stones more were taken out of *Jordan*, whilst it was dry, by Twelve

[c] Lightf. Chorograph. Centur. c. 48. p. 46.

Men

Men chosen out of the People, One out of every Tribe, and were pitched in *Gilgal*, ℣ 20. Thus did *the Lord magnify Joshua in the sight of all Israel*; *and they feared him, as they feared Moses, all the days of his life*, ℣ 14. Here was a Miracle wrought in the most remarkable Manner, to which the whole People were Witnesses, and effectual Care was taken to keep up the Remembrance of it. The Waters of *Jordan* were cut off, for the Passage of the *Children of Israel* into *Canaan*, as the Waters of the *Red-Sea* had been divided, to procure their Escape out of *Ægypt*; and such an Experiment was not to have been made twice, if it had not been a true Miracle.

They were no sooner come into the *promised Land*, but all the Males were Circumcised, (that Rite having been omitted in the Wilderness) and were thereby disabled for War: Which had been a strange Policy, for the Invaders of a Country to wound themselves, and render themselves unfit for Fight, as soon as they arriv'd in the Coasts of the Enemy, if the *Canaanites* had not been restrained by a miraculous Awe and Power from setting upon them, as the Sons of *Jacob* did upon the *Shechemites*, Gen. xxxiv. before they were recovered of their Soreness, after Circumcision. And for a perpetual Memorial of this Action, the Place where they were Circumcised was called *Gibeah haaraloth*, *or*, *the hill of the Fore-skins*.

The Walls of *Jericho* were thrown down, only by marching round it seven Days, and blowing with Trumpets; and this was accompanied with a Prophecy, That whosoever should attempt to rebuild *Jericho*, should *lay the foundation thereof in his first-born, and in his youngest son should he set up the gates of it*, Josh. vi. 26. which was fulfill'd in the Reign of *Ahab*, when *Hiel* the *Beth-elite* lost his eldest Son *Abiram*, upon his laying the Foundation of it, and his youngest Son *Segub*, upon his setting up the Gates, 1 *Kings* xvi. 34. These Miracles, and the Standing still of the Sun and Moon

Moon, whilst the *Israelites* pursued and vanquished their Enemies; and the prodigious Hail-stones cast down from Heaven, which slew more of them than the Sword could do; and a continued Course of Victories, never interrupted but for *Achan*'s Offence, struck such a mighty Terror into the *Canaanites*, that some of them sought out Ways to make their Peace with the *Israelites*, by Submission; and others fled into foreign Countries. And to shew that they conquer'd by a Miraculous and Divine Power, not by any carnal Force or Strength; *Joshua*, by God's Command, destroy'd the Horses and the Chariots that he took from the Enemy, *Josh.* xi. 9. Which had been a strange Action in Human Policy; but by such unlikely Means he subdued one and thirty Kings of the *Canaanites*, chap. xii. and then divided the Land, not yet conquer'd, amongst the Tribes of *Israel*, being as certain of it, as if they had it already in Possession, *chap.* xiii. 2, 7.

Joshua, after so many Victories, and so many Miracles, when the Land of *Canaan* came to be divided among the *Children of Israel*, took no more of his own Inheritance, than they were willing to spare him, after the Land had been divided among the Tribes, *chap.* xix. 49. And at last, as *Moses* had done, he appeals to their own Experience, and to their very Senses, for the Truth of all the Wonders and Deliverances, and the mighty Works which God had wrought amongst them, *chap.* xxiv.

After the Death of *Joshua*, [f] who had ruled twenty eight Years, God rais'd up *Judges* out of several Families and Tribes, with an immediate and extraordinary Commission to govern and protect his People: So that there could be no private Ends, or politick Designs carried on, under the Pretence of a Divine Commission. But upon their Disobedience and Ido-

[f] Mas. ad Jos. xxiv. 31.

latries, they were, from time to time, punish'd with Slaughter and Captivity; and, upon their Repentance, were as constantly deliver'd; Judges being purposely raised up to be conquerors and Deliverers, and never failing of Success.

But besides these who were impower'd by God, upon extraordinary Occasions, they had other Judges, or Chief Magistrates, to administer Justice, and to preside over the Publick Affairs, for the Welfare of the People: such were *Eli* and *Samuel*. *Eli* was a great Example, how much Fondness, and Natural Affection, may prevail over good and wise Men; but he was more afflicted to hear that the Ark of God was taken, than at the Death of both his Sons; *that* gave him his mortal Wound, and he could not outlive the hearing it, 1 *Sam.* iv. 18. *Samuel*'s Sons were wicked as well as *Eli*'s, and he doth not conceal their Faults, but plainly says, That *they turned aside after lucre, and took Bribes, and perverted judgment*, chap. viii. 3. But he appeals to the whole People for his own Integrity, who solemnly declare him free from any Oppression or Injustice. He resign'd the Government, tho' he had the Power in his hands to appoint two Kings successively; and by God's Commandment, rais'd both *Saul* and *David* out of their Obscurity to a Throne. *Samuel* says plainly, That when the Elders of *Israel* came to him to ask a King, *the thing displeased him*, 1 *Sam.* viii. 6. And he who could make two Kings of two different Tribes, and of no Interest in their respective Tribes, might as well have made himself King, if he had acted upon Human Considerations, and by Human Power and Means. The Divine Power therefore was visible in the Government of the *Children of Israel*, from the time of *Moses* and *Joshua* to *Saul*; for they were constantly govern'd by Persons of God's Appointment; their Government was a Theocracy, being administred by God's immediate Direction

ction, *the Lord their God was their King*, 1 Sam. xii. 12. During which time, they had likewise Prophets, *Judg.* iv. 4. vi. 8. And tho' *the Word of the Lord was precious*, or rare, *in the Days of Eli*, yet the manner of Divine Revelation was so well known to him, that *he perceived that the Lord had called Samuel*, Sam. iii. 1, 8.

CHAP. VIII.

Of the People of Israel *under their Kings.*

After a standing Regal Government was settled among the People of *Israel*, they were either Happy or Miserable at home, and either a Defeat or Victory attended their Armies abroad, as they prov'd obedient or disobedient to the Law of *Moses*, and to the Word of the Lord, deliver'd by his Prophets. Upon the Revolt of the Ten Tribes, when Two Tribes only remain'd in the Obedience of *Rehoboam*, and in the true way of Worship, this had been the time, (as already has been said) if there had been any Imposture hitherto carried on, to discover it; for they had all the Temptation, and all the Opportunity to do it, that could possibly be given. But after the Division of the Ten Tribes, *Jeroboam* durst not so much as attempt to draw them off from an Acknowledgement of the Divine Authority of that Law, by which they were obliged to go up to *Jerusalem* to sacrifice, though he persuaded them to change the Place of their Worship, and to go no longer up thither. And God had his Prophets in *Israel*, who were as zealous for the Law, as the Prophets of *Judah*; for in both Kingdoms they had still Prophets to admonish them, and to direct them in all Matters of great Im-

portance. Though the *Urim* and *Thummim*, and the *Shechina*, were confined to the *Aaronical* Priesthood, and the Ark of the Testament; yet the other kinds of Prophecy were vouchsafed to *Israel*, as well as *Judah:* And the Captivity both of *Judah* and *Israel* by the *Assyrians*, and the Deliverance of the *Jews* out of it, befel them according to express Prophecies; and both during the Captivity, and at their Return, they had *Daniel*, *Zechariah*, *Malachi*, and other Prophets amongst them; and for so many Ages, from their first coming out of *Ægypt*, the whole People were made continually Witnesses of the manifest Power and Presence of God amongst them. This will be evident, by making some Observations concerning the Prophets and their Writings, and concerning their Prophecies and Miracles.

CHAP. IX.

Of the Prophets, and their Writings.

THE kinds of Prophecy among the *Jews*, were, 1. The *Shechina*. 2. The *Urim* and *Thummim*. 3. *Revelation* by Visions and Dreams, or by Inspiration; for I shall not here distinguish these Ways of Revelation, to consider them apart. And when these kinds of Prophecy ceas'd under the Second Temple, the *Bath Kol*, or *Voice from Heaven*, was the only Way of Revelation: But of this there is little or nothing certain to be rely'd upon.

1. The *Shechina*, was the sitting, or dwelling of God between the Cherubims, on the Mercy-Seat, or Cover of the Ark, *Psal.* lxxxi. 1. and xcix. 1. from whence he gave out his Answers by an Articulate Voice, *Exod.* xxv. 22. and xxix. 42. *Numb.* vii. 89.

2. The

2. The *Urim* and *Thummim* upon the Breast-plate of the High-Priest, *Exod.* xxviii. 30. was another standing Oracle, to be consulted upon all great Occasions, *Num.* xxvii. 21. 1 *Sam.* xxviii. 6. xxiii. 9. xxx. 7. *Ezra* ii. 63. And the Answers were return'd by a visible Signification of the Divine Will. This Oracle was not only venerable amongst the *Jews*, but was famous amongst the *Heathen* (as [a] *Josephus* assures us) for its infallible Answers. Mr. *Mede* [b] thinks the *Urim and Thummim* to have been in Use among the Patriarchs, before the Law was given; because the making of them is not spoken of amongst the other Things of the *Ephod*. The common Opinion is, that this Oracle was delivered by the shining of such Letters of the Tribes Names, engraven on the Stones in the Priest's Breast-Plate, as expres'd the Answer: But the same learned Author thinks, that the *Urim* and the *Thummim* were distinct Oracles; the *Thummim* shewing when their Sacrifices were accepted, and the *Urim* answering such Questions as were proposed upon any important Occasion.

3. *Revelations* by Vision and Dreams, or by Inspiration, were the Revelations which properly denominated those, to whom they were made, Prophets. For the Prophets were Persons sent by God, with an extraordinary Commission, to declare his Will; and they were not confined to the Tribe of *Levi*, or to any one particular Tribe, but sometimes taken out of one Tribe, and sometimes out of another. For tho' the *Jews* had Colleges and Schools to prepare and qualify Men, by a virtuous and religious Education, for Divine Illuminations; yet divers others, who had not been educated in this Manner, were endued with the Spirit of Prophecy; and some of them were but of very mean Employments, and others again of Royal Blood.

[a] Joseph. Antiq. l 3. c. 9. [b] Mede's *Discourse*, 35.

They reproved both their Kings and their Priests with a fearless and undaunted Freedom and Authority: and this Plain-dealing, such as became Men who spake and acted by a Divine Impulse, without Design, and without any Disguise, sometimes commanded great Reverence towards them from Princes, not easie to be well advised or directed. *Rehoboam*, a wilful and rash Prince, at the head of an Army of an hundred and fourscore thousand chosen Men, upon the Word of the Lord, delivered to him by *Shemaiah*, returned home without attempting any thing, to regain the Tribes that had revolted from him to *Jeroboam*, 1 Kings xii. 21. *Ahab*, though an exceeding wicked King, after a signal Victory, bore the Reproof of a Prophet, who denounced a Judgment upon Him and his People, for letting *Benhadad* go, and was much concerned at it, 1 *Kings* xx. 42, 43. And the same *Ahab* rent his Clothes, and put on Sackcloth, and fasted, at the Reproof of *Elijah*, 1 Kings xxi. 27. *Amaziah*, by the Admonition of a Prophet, dismiss'd an *hundred thousand mighty men of valour*, whom he had hired of the *Israelites* for an hundred Talents, being content to lose so many Talents, and to want their help in the War, and to venture the Ravage that such an Army, who look'd upon themselves as affronted, made in his Country; upon the Prophet's assuring him, that God would give him the Victory, if he would dismiss them, but not otherwise; and telling him, *The Lord is able to give thee much more than this:* And the Event proved the Truth of the Prediction, 2 *Chron.* xxv. The *Children of Israel* likewise, at the Word of *Oded* the Prophet, sent back two hundred thousand Persons of the Kingdom of *Judah* with great Spoil, which they had taken, 2 *Chron.* xxviii. So ready and so general a Compliance, in such cases, could arise from nothing but a certain Belief and Experience of the Truth of what the Prophets delivered: But at other times they were despised and persecuted.

And

And the Truth of their Prophecies was not only attested by Miracles, and justified by the Event, and confessed by the Deference and Respect both of the Kings and People; but it was asserted by the Sufferings, and sealed by the Blood of the Prophets, and was at last acknowledged by the Posterity of those who had slain them; they being most forward and zealous to adorn the Tombs of the Prophets, whom their Fore-fathers had killed; and to die, in vindication of those Prophecies, for which they had been slain. There was a constant Succession of Prophets, from the time of *Moses*, till the Return of the *Jews* from their Captivity in *Babylon*; some propheſied for many Years; *Jeremiah*, for above one and forty Years; *Ezekiel*, about twenty Years; the least time assigned to *Hosea*'s Propheſying, is forty three Years; *Amos* propheſied about six and twenty Years; *Micah*, about fifty; *Isaiah*, *Jonah*, and *Daniel*, a much longer time: so that they lived to see divers of their own Prophecies fulfilled; and to have suffered as false Prophets, if they had not come to pass. And though many Prophecies were not to be fulfilled, till long after the Death of the Prophets who delivered them; yet they wrought Miracles, or they foretold some things, which came to pass soon after, according to their Predictions, to give Evidence to their Authority, and confirm their Divine Mission. St. *Jerom* observes that the Prophets are not said to have received the Presents, which were offer'd them, in *Micheam*, c. iii. As to the Presents, which are sometimes said to have been made the Prophets, it was a Custom, and is known to be still in the Eastern Countries, to approach no Man of Eminency without a Present; which was a Token of Respect and Reverence, being in it self often inconsiderable; as *Saul* for want of Bread, presented *Samuel* with *the fourth part of a Shekel of Silver*, 1 Sam. ix. 8. which is not above Nine-pence of our Money. The Children of *Belial*, to shew their Contempt of *Saul*,

brought him no Presents when he was King, 1 *Sam.* x. 27. And *Samuel* was presented with a Gift, because of his Dignity; for he was an *honourable Man*, chap. ix. 6.

The Prophets committed their Prophecies to Writing, and left them to Posterity, *Isa.* xxx. 8. *Jer.* xxx. 2. and xxxvi. 32. *Hab.* ii. 1, 2. And the Writing of the Histories of the *Jews* belonged to the Prophets, 1 *Chron.* xxix. 29. 2 *Chron.* xii. 15. xiii. 22. xx. 34. xxvi. 22. xxxii. 32. [c] *Josephus* accordingly writes, that from the Death of *Moses* to the Reign of *Artaxerxes* Successor to *Xerxes* in the Kingdoms of *Persia*, the Prophets penned the Histories of their own Times. And both in their Prophetical and Historical Books they deal with the greatest Plainness and Sincerity; they record the Idolatries of the Nation, and foretel the Judgments of God which were to befal it upon that account; and they leave to Posterity a Relation of the Miscarriages and Crimes of their best Princes. *David*, *Solomon*, and others, who were Types of the *Messias*, and from whose Race they expected Him, and looked upon the Glories of their several Reigns to be Presages of His, are yet described not only without Flattery, but without any Reserve or Extenuation: They write as Men who had no Regard to any Thing but Truth, and the Glory of God, in telling it.

The Prophets were sometimes commanded to seal and shut up their Prophecies, that the Originals might be preserved till the fulfilling of them, and then compared with the Event, *Isa.* viii. 16. *Jer.* xxxii. 14. *Dan.* viii. 26. and xii. 4. For when the Prophecies were not to be fulfilled till many Years, and, in some Cases, not till several Ages afterwards, it was requisite that the Original Writings should be kept with all Care; but when the time was so near at hand, that the Prophecies must be in every one's Memory, or that the Originals could not be suspected or supposed to

[c] Contra Ap. l. 1.

be

be lost, there was not the same Care required, *Rev.* xxii. 10. It seems to have been customary [d] for the Prophets to put their Writings into the Tabernacle, or lay them up before the Lord, 1 *Sam.* x. 25. And there is a Tradition, [e] That all the Canonical Books, as well as the Law, were put into the Side of the Ark.

It is certain, that the Books of the Law, and the Writings of the ancient Prophets, were carefully preserved, during the Captivity, and are frequently referred to, and cited by the latter Prophets: The *Pentateuch* has been already spoken of; and this is as evident of the Books of the Prophets. The Prophecy of *Micah* is quoted, *Jer.* xxvi. 18. a little before the Captivity; and under it, the Prophecy of *Jeremiah* is cited, *Dan.* ix. 2. and all the Prophets, ℣ 6. And so the Prophets in general are mentioned, *Nehem.* ix. 26, 30. *Zechariah* not only cites the *former* Prophets, *Zech.* i. 4. but supposes their Writings well known to the People; *Should ye not hear the words which the Lord hath cried by the former prophets, when Jerusalem was inhabited, and in prosperity?* chap. vii. 7. The Prophet *Amos* is likewise cited, *Tob.* ii. 6. and *Jonas*, and the Prophets in general, *chap.* xiv. 4, 5, 8. There can then be no reason to question, but that *Ezra*, *Nehemiah*, *Daniel*, *Zechariah*, and the other Prophets in the time of the Captivity, were very careful to keep the Books of the former Prophets; for they frequently cite them and appeal to them; and expected Deliverance out of their Captivity, by the Accomplishment of them. And perhaps, from the Originals themselves, or however, from Copies taken by *Ezra* the Scribe, or by some of the latter Prophets, or at least acknowledged for genuine, and approved of by them, the ancient Prophecies, and other Inspired Writings, were preserved; and those of the latter Prophets

[d] Joseph. Antiq. l. 11. c. 1. & l. 6. c. 5.

[e] Epiphan. de Ponderib. & Mensur. c. 4. Damascen. de Fide Orthodox. l. 4. c. 17.

were

were added to them; and all together, make up *the Book of the Prophets*, mention'd *Acts* vii. 42. which was read, as well as the Law, every *Sabbath-day*, Acts xiii. 27.

The Books of *Joshua*, *Judges*, *Samuel*, and *Kings* have the Title of the *former Prophets*, in the Hebrew Bibles, to distinguish them from the Books, which bear the Title of the *later Prophets*, *Isaiah*, *Jeremiah*, &c. The Books of *Joshua* and *Judges* have been already spoken of. The Books of *Samuel* were written by *Samuel*, *Nathan*, and *Gad*, 1 Chron. xxix. 29. From whence we may conclude, that the First Book of *Samuel*, to the 25th Chapter, was written by *Samuel* himself; and the rest of that, and the whole Second Book, by *Nathan* and *Gad*. But *Samuel* being a Person so much concerned in the former part of the History, and having written so much of it, out of respect to him, the whole two Books go under his Name: though, indeed, [f] the *Jews* anciently reckoned both the Books of *Samuel* as one Book; and *Aquila* (as *Theodoret* has observed) made no distinction between the First and the Second Books of *Samuel*, following the Hebrew Copies of his time: And it is no wonder, that a Book begun by *Samuel*, and continued by other Prophets, should bear the Name only of *Samuel*. From 1 *Chron.* xxix. 29. we may likewise learn, that the Beginning of the First Book of *Kings* must be written by one of these Prophets. The History of *Hezekiah* in *Isaiah* and in the Book of *Kings* is in the same Words, 2 *Kings* xviii. 13. xix, xx. *Isai.* xxxvi, xxxvii, xxxviii, xxxix. Which shews, that the historical Books were composed by the Prophets, or transcribed from their Writings. Both the Books of *Kings*, as far as *Hezekiah*'s Reign, were written before *Josiah*'s time; for, 2 *Kings* xviii. 5.

[f] Origen. apud Euseb. l. 6. c. 15. Athan. Epist. Fest. Hier. in lib. Reg. Præf. Cyrill. Hier. Catech. 4. Epiphan. de Mensur. & Ponderib. n. 4.

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it is said of *Hezekiah*, That *he trusted in the Lord God of Israel; so that after him was none like him of all the Kings of Judah, nor any that were before him:* And of *Josiah*, it is said, 2 *Kings* xxiii. 25. That *like unto him there was no King before him, that turned to the Lord with all his heart*, &c. For it is evident, that *Josiah*, in his Reformation, exceeded *Hezekiah*; and from hence it appears, that the History of *Hezekiah* must be written before *Josiah*'s time; or else it could not have been, with Truth, said of *Hezekiah*, That there was no King after him who was like him, or equall'd him, of all the Kings of *Judah*. From 1 *Chron.* iv. 43. it appears, that it was written before the Captivity; though the Genealogies were transcribed afterwards out of the Records, as we learn from 1 *Chron.* ix. 1. The [g] Second Book of *Chronicles* was not distinguished by the *Jews* from the First, but both made one Book, as did the two Books of *Kings*. That the Second Book of *Chronicles*, as well as the First Book of *Kings*, was written before the Captivity of *Judah*, we may conclude from 2 *Chron.* v. 9. x. 19. 1. *Kings* viii. 8. for the Ark was not remaining after the Captivity. Great part of the Second Book of *Kings* was penned before the Captivity of *Israel*, 2 *Kings* xiii. 23. The last Chapter of the Second Book of *Kings*, gives so particular an Account of the manner of carrying them away Captive, in every material Circumstance, that it seems to have been written at that very time; and is an Argument, that Memoirs were constantly taken and preserved, of all that happened. The Second Book of *Chronicles* concludes with the first Year of *Cyrus*, in the same Words with which the Book of *Ezra* begins, being added by him at the time when *Cyrus* gave out his Proclamation: for the Prophets, from time to time,

g. Origen. apud Euseb. ib. Athan. Epist. Festalis. Hieron. ib. Cyril. Hierosol. ib. Epiphan. ib.

made

made Continuations to the Histories of their Predecessors, by inserting what related to their own Times; and it was no unusual Thing, among the Ancients, (as *Grotius* observes) to begin one Book with the Conclusion of another. This we see in the History of *Dionysius Halicarnasseus*, who knew as well as any Man the Art of Writing, and was as much acquainted with the Works of the Authors before him. To say, without any Authority from MSS. that this could so often happen in his History, by any Mistake of the Transcribers, is altogether groundless. The End of his Tenth Book, and the Beginning of the Eleventh, have the same Sense, tho' with such Variation in Words, as could not be by Chance. It is observable, that the Historical Books of Scripture have a plain Reference one to another: Thus *Joshua* begins his Book, *Now, after the death of Moses*, or as it is in the *Septuagint*, *And after*, &c. So the Book of *Judges*, *Now after the death of Joshua.* And *Ruth*, in like manner, *Now it came to pass in the days when the Judges ruled.* All the Historical Books refer to each other, except the First Book of *Chronicles*, and that of *Nehemiah*, [h] which yet by the *Jews*, was reckoned, together with *Ezra*, but as one Book. The reason why the First Book of *Chronicles* can have no reference to any preceding Book, is plain, because it begins with the Genealogy from *Adam.* And *Nehemiah* begins his Book by prefixing his Name, *The words of Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah*, and then sets down the Year and Month; so that there could be no need of any other Connexion. In this he imitated the Prophets; *The vision of Isaiah the son of Amos*; *The words of Jeremiah the son of Hilkiah.* But *Ezekiel* and *Jonah* have likewise used the same Reference, with which the Historical Books begin. Tho' this

[h] Hieron. in lib. Reg. Præf. Origen. apud Euseb. Hist. l. 6. c. 25. Cyrill. Hieros. catech. 4.

could

could not be so needful in Prophecies, to which the Name of Prophets stand prefix'd, as in Historical Books written without the Author's Name: None of which was designed as a separate Work by itself, but for a Continuation or Supplement of what had been written before, that all together might make up one entire History, in the same Manner as *Moses*, and all Authors, both ancient and modern, usually connect the several Books of which their Works are composed. The * Book of *Esther* was taken from publick *Acts*, read every Year on the Feast of *Surim:* Which is sufficient Evidence both of its Original, and of its Preservation. † *Origen* concludes from *chap.* xix. 23. that the Book of *Job* was written by him, or his Friends, in their own Language, and translated by *Moses* into *Hebrew*; for a Pattern of Patience to the *Israelites* under their Bondage in *Ægypt:* And with *Origen* the *Rabbins* herein agree.

The *Psalms* are quoted under the Title of the *Prophets*, [i] Mat. xiii. 35. and [k] xxvii. 35. and from the first Penning, they were used in the Publick Service of God, 1 *Chron.* xvi. 7. 2 *Chron.* v. 13. vii. 6. xx. 21. xxix. 30. *Jer.* xxxiii. 11. *Ezra* iii. 10, 11. This was known even to their Enemies, in their Captivity, *Psal.* cxxxvii. 3. and some of them were written by the Prophets under it. And Lessons out of the Law and the Prophets, with Hymns out of the *Psalms*, and Prayers, made up the *Jewish* Form of Worship. *Moses and the Prophets*, are put for the whole Old Testament, *Luke* xvi. 29. *Acts* xiii. 15. And *Luke* xxiv. 44. the whole Old Testament is divided into *Moses*, the *Prophets*, and the *Psalms*. The *Psalms* being put for all the *Hagiographa*, [l] because the

* Vid. Targum *in* Esther ix. 27. & cap. ii. 23. viii.

† Orig. *in* Job lib. 1. initio. Sixtus Senens. l. 1.

[i] *Psal.* LXXVIII *written by* Asaph.

[k] *Psal.* XXII. *by* David.

[l] Surenhusius de concil. V. & N. T. loc. p. 281.

Psalms

I

Psalms were the First in order of the *Hagiographa*. The *Law*, by an usual Figure of Speech, s used for the *Psalms*, John x. 34. xv. 25. for the *Prophets*, 1 Cor. xiv. 21. and for the *Old Testament*, Rom. iii. 19. In which sense the LXXII. are by some Authors said to have translated the *Law*, when they translated the Jewish Canon of Scripture, as * *Eusebius*, *Epiphanius*, and most of the Rabbins agree.

And if *both the Law and the Prophets*, comprehending all the Books of Scripture written before the Captivity, were still extant, and well known and made use of by pious Men during all that time; and the People had Copies of them, or had Means and Opportunities of being acquainted with them, as the Prophet *Zechariah* supposes, *Zech.* vii. 7. there is no reason to imagine, that they had not sufficient Knowledge of the Hebrew Tongue at their Restoration, many being still alive, who were first carried away Captive: And the Writings of the Prophets, during their Captivity, and upon their Return, shew that the People did understand it; for they all wrote in the Hebrew Language, except upon some particular Occasions, where their Prophecies more immediately concerned the *Babylonian* Affairs. Both Men and Women could understand *Ezra*, when he read the Law; *And the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law*, Neh. viii. 3. It was not the Language, unless in some Particulars, which in all Languages will want Explication to the Vulgar, who are Natives; but the *Sense* and *Meaning*, that was interpreted, † ℣ 7, 8. And in the same manner, the Letter of *Arta-*

* Euseb. de Præpar. Evang. lib. 8. Procem. Epiphan. de Pond. & Men. n. 3. Morin. Exercitat. in Pentat. p. 273. & Biblic. Exercitat. p. 360.

† Και ἀνεγνωσαν ἐν βιβλιῳ νομε τε Θεε, και ἐδιδασκεν Ἐσδρας, και διεσελλεν ἐν ἐπισημῃ κυρλε, και σωηνεν ὁ λαος ἐν τῃ ἀναγνωσει. Et legerunt in libro Dei distinctè & apertè ad intelligendum, & intellexerunt, cum legeretur.

xerxes

Xerxes was both *written in the Syrian Tongue*, and *interpreted in the Syrian tongue*, Ezra iv. 7. *Nehemiah* particularly complains, that the Children of those who had married strange Wives, *could not speak in the Jews language:* Which supposes that the Children of other Parents, as well as the Parents themselves were taught to speak the *Hebrew* Tongue, *Neh.* xiii. 24. And the Decree of *Ahasuerus* in favour of the *Jews*, was written *unto every province, according unto the writing thereof; and unto every People, after their language; and unto the Jews, according to their writing, and acccording to their language*, Est. viii. 9. Which seems to imply, that the *Jews* still retained not only their Language, but their manner of writing it, or the Form and Fashion of their Letters, under the Captivity. The *Hebrew* Tongue is now understood among the *Jews*, tho' spoken readily by few, beside their Rabbins: But we may observe, how easie it is for that People, distinguished and separated by their Rites, from those among whom they live, to retain their Native Language in Captivity, by what they do now. For [m] many *Jews*, who out of *Germany* went into *Poland*, *Hungary*, and *Russia*, still retain the *German* Tongue in their Families; and those that, when they were driven out of *Spain*, fled to the *Levant*, carried the *Spanish* Tongue along with them; which remains the Language of their Posterity: And in *Italy* the *German Jews* speak *Dutch*, and the *Spanish Jews* keep the *Spanish* Tongue.

So little Credit is to be given to the Story in the Apocryphal Book of *Ezra*, that the Law being burnt, *Ezra* was inspired to dictate it all anew, which was taken from his Mouth by five Writers, who in forty Days wrote two hundred and four Books, the former of which were to be made publick, but the seventy last were to be delivered only to the *Wise*, i. e. to the Rabbins, 2 *Esd.* xiv. 40. which is plainly a *Jewish*

[m] Leo Moden. Pt. 2. c. 1. § 1.

Fable

Fable invented to authorize their Traditions. And yet this groundless Story, so contrary to Scripture, and to the Writings of some of the most learned of the [n] Rabbins, in a Book that is rejected both by *Protestants* and *Papists*, has prevailed too much with both.

After their Return, the *Jews* were a free People, till the time of *Alexander the Great*, who only requir'd Tribute of them, but left them to their own Law and Government; so that no occasion was given to any considerable Change in their Language, as [o] *Vossius* computes, 'till the first Year of the CXVII Olympiad, when *Jerusalem* was taken by *Ptolemæus Lagi*; and twenty seven Years after was the Version of the Septuagint, by whom, not long after the Decease of those that return'd from the Captivity, the Scriptures were translated into the *Greek* Tongue; and were dispersed into so many Hands, among the *Jews* and *Proselytes*, that the Copies could not be destroyed, either in the time of *Antiochus Epiphanes*, or at any other time, by the Malice of Persecutors, or any other Accident. And tho' the *Jews* were so fond of other Traditions, as to *make the word of God of none effect* by them; yet they never added any Books to the Canon of Scripture, in favour of those Traditions for which they were so zealous: But when they had no longer any Prophets among them, they durst not place any other Books in the same Rank and Authority with those which the Prophets had left behind them. All the Canonical Books were written by inspired Authors, and have been in constant use among the People of the *Jews*, in their private Houses and publick Assemblies, even from the first writing them; for they were preserv'd during the Captivity, and both understood and used by the People: but their other Books, written

[n] David Kimhi & Jacob. Benhaym. apud Sixt. Senens. l. 8. Hær. 2.

[o] If. Voss. ad iteratas P. Simonii Object. Respons. p. 373.

under-

under the second Temple, tho' never so useful and pious, were never receiv'd with the like Esteem and Veneration; they pretended to no more than Human Composition, and were never rank'd with those of Divine Authority. [p] *Josephus* declares, that there was no Succession of Prophets after the Reign of *Artaxerxes*; and that the Historical Books written afterwards, were not of the same Authority with those before that time. The [q] *Jews*, with a general Consent, acknowledge, that during the second Temple, there was neither the Ark, (nor consequently the *Shechina*) nor the *Urim and Thummim*, nor the Fire from Heaven, nor the Holy Oil, nor the Holy Spirit, in the Gifts of Prophecies and Miracles. This is a Confession of the *Jews* against themselves; which is much urged upon them by *Christians*, to prove that our Saviour is the *Messias*, and that his Presence alone could make the *Glory of the latter house greater than of the former*, Hag. ii. 9. And their Confession herein adds great Weight to their Testimony in behalf of all these kinds of Prophecy, which they affirm to have been under the first Temple, and of this Prophecy of *Haggai*, as well as of the rest in the Old Testament.

CHAP. X.

Of the Prophecies and Miracles of the Prophets.

THE False Prophets prophesied in the Name of *Jehovah*, 1 Kings xxii. which supposes that True Prophecies were wont to be deliver'd in his Name, or else they could never have hop'd to deceive by it.

p Contr. Ap. l. 1.

q *Vid.* Bochart. Hierozoic. Par. 1. l. 2. c. 35.

And in the Historical Books of the *Old Testament*, in which the Prophecies and Miracles of the Prophets are related, reference is frequently made to the Records then extant in the *Chronicles* of the *Kings* of *Judah* and *Israel*; most of the Prophecies and Miracles being of that publick Nature, and so intermix'd with the Affairs of State, that they must be recorded together with them.

Josiah [a] was propheſy'd of by Name, three hundred sixty one Years before the Event: *Behold, a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name*, 1 Kings xiii. 2. And this was foretold by a Prophet, who came out of *Judah*, purposely to denounce the Judgments of God upon the Priests of the Altar, and upon the Altar it self, which *Jeroboam* had newly set up at *Bethel*, when *Jeroboam* stood by the Altar to burn Incense: And his Prediction, at the same time, was confirm'd by two Miracles; one wrought upon *Jeroboam* himself, by drying up his Hand, which he stretched forth against the Prophet, and which, by the Prophet's Prayer, was restor'd again whole to him, as it was before; the other Miracle was wrought upon the Altar, by rending it, and pouring out the Ashes from it. And a Prophecy deliver'd in the Presence and to the Face of an enrag'd Prince, against the Religion of his own setting up, to secure to himself the Kingdom he so lately became possessed of, at the very time when he was offering Incense upon his new Altar: And this Prophecy, confirm'd by an immediate Judgment both upon the King himself, and his Altar, in the sight of so numerous an Appearance as must be present on so solemn an Occasion, and these Enemies to the Prophet, who came from *Judah*, and to his Religion; a Prophecy thus delivered, had all the Circumstances to make it remarkable and notorious, in all the

[a] Joseph. Antiq. l. 10. c. 5.

Tribes

Tribes both of *Israel* and *Judah*, then at Hostility with each other, that can almost be conceiv'd: And yet the strange Death of the Prophet of *Judah*, for trangressing, by his own Confession, the Word of the Lord to him; and his Sepulchre, with its Title or Inscription, still remaining at *Bethel* when *Josiah* demolished the Altar there, gave a farther Confirmation to it.

The fulfilling of this Prophecy by *Josiah*, was no less remarkable, 2 *Kings* xxii. 15. *Josiah* was the Son of a very wicked King, and born at a time when the People were exceedingly corrupted by the Idolatry of his Grandfather *Manasses*; and his Sons likewise proved wicked: so that he was so singular in his Piety, and so wonderful an Example of it, that no Man of his own Age could have imagined that of him, which had been foretold so many hundred Years ago. In all human Appearance, this was a very unlikely time to see that Prophecy fulfill'd; and that which had been wonderful in any Age, was much more wonderful in this: and in so wicked an Age, this good King set about the Work of Reformation very young; to shew, that it was not of Men, but of God. The Prophet *Ahijah*, who had propheſy'd, that *Jeroboam* should be King of the Ten Tribes, (1 *Kings* xi. 31.) foretold likewise the Death of *Jeroboam*'s Son, the Destruction of his Family, and the Captivity of those Tribes by the *Assyrians*, (1 *Kings* xiv. 10.)

The Deliverance of *Judah*, at *Jehoshaphat*'s Prayer, was foretold by *Jahaziel*, in the midst of the Congregation; and was accomplish'd accordingly, by their Enemies destroying one another, 2 *Chron.* xx.

Elijah foretold, that the Dogs should lick *Ahab*'s Blood in *Jezreel*, where they had lick'd the Blood of *Naboth:* Which, as [b] *Josephus* says, was objected by

[b] Joseph. Antiq. l. 8. c. 10.

Zedekiah, one of the False Prophets, against *Micaiah*, who foretold, that *Ahab* should be slain at *Ramoth-gilead*; but he was brought home in his Chariot from *Ramoth-gilead* to *Samaria*, and there the Dogs lick'd his Blood in *Jezreel*, 1 Kings xxii. 38. so that both the Prophecy of *Elijah* and *Micaiah* was fulfill'd. And when one Prophet seems contrary to another, one foretelling the principal Thing, and another some accidental Circumstance, which those that were present, and most concerned in the Action, could not imagine, 'till it happen'd; and False Prophets, in the mean time, watch the Event, to take all Advantages from it, against the True Prophets, and can find none: nothing more can be desired, to assure us of the Truth of any Prophecy. The same Prophet foretold the like Judgment upon *Jezebel*, and that the House of *Ahab* should be like the House of *Jeroboam*, and like the House *Baasha*; the Destruction of both which had been foretold by other Prophets, and their Prophecies fulfill'd, as this of *Elijah*'s also was.

Elijah, by a Writing sent to *Jehoram* King of *Judah*, foretold his Death, and the strange manner of it, *viz.* That after the Loss of his Children, and his Wives, and all his Goods, he should be afflicted in his Bowels, and that his Bowels should fall out by degrees, 2 *Chron.* xxi. 12. And as *Isaiah* propheſy'd of *Cyrus*, and another Prophet of *Josiah*, by Name, long before they were born: So *Elijah* left behind him this Prophecy in writing which was deliver'd to *Jehoram*. The same Prophet not only foretold the Death of *Ahaziah*, but caus'd Fire twice to come down from Heaven, upon those who were sent to apprehend him, 2 *Kings* i. And at his Prayer, Fire descended from Heaven, and consumed the Sacrifice, in the sight of *Baal*'s Prophets, being four hundred and fifty; to whom *Elijah*, who was the only Prophet of the Lord there present had made this Proposal,

posal, *The God that answereth by fire, let him be God:* And when *Baal*, notwithstanding all their hideous Cries, and the cutting themselves, did not hear them; then, upon *Elijah*'s Prayer, *the fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the burnt-sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench*, 1 Kings xviii. 38. Which was the same Miracle, repeated in the midst of Idolaters, who were so provoked and enraged against the Prophet *Elijah*, that had been before wrought in the sight of the People of *Israel*, in the time of *Moses*, Lev. ix. 24. and of *David*, 1 Chron. xxi. 26. and at the Dedication of *Solomon*'s Temple, 2 *Chron.* vii. 1. [c] And this Miracle of *Elijah*, in bringing down Fire from Heaven, to consume the Sacrifice, and that of *Moses* in like manner, were both confess'd to be true, by *Julian the Apostate* himself.

The miraculous Cure of *Naaman*'s Leprosie, must be notorious throughout the Kingdoms both of *Syria* and *Israel*, 2 Kings v. The wonderful Deliverance of the *Israelites*, when the *Syrians* heard a Noise of Horses and Chariots, and therefore rais'd the Siege of *Samaria*, and the Plenty which followed, was foretold by *Elisha*, with a Judgment upon that Lord who doubted of the Truth of his Prediction. The same Prophet foretold the Death of *Benhadad* King of *Syria*, and that he should never recover of his Sickness, nor die a Natural Death. And the Reign of *Hazael*, who succeeded him, is described in such true and dreadful Characters, that *Hazael* thought it impossible for him to be guilty of so much Cruelty, 2 *Kings* vii. viii.

The Leprosie inflicted upon *Uzziah*, for presuming to burn Incense unto the Lord, which it was lawful for the Priests only to do, was a permanent Miracle; for his Leprosie continued till his Death; and for

[c] Cyril. contra Julian. l. 10. p. 343. Edit. Lips.

that reason, he lived separately, and his Son, from that time, had the Administration of Affairs, 2 *Kings* xv. 5. And this Miracle of the Leprosie was [d] accompanied with a terrible Earthquake, mentioned *Zech.* xiv. 5. *Amos.* i. and the [e] Ruins which were caus'd by the Earthquake, remain'd as a perpetual Memorial of the Judgment.

An hundred fourscore and five thousand of the *Assyrians* were slain by an Angel of the Lord, in one Night, 2 *Kings* xix. 35. and this Deliverance was foretold by *Isaiah*, when the *Assyrians* were in the height of their Pride and Blasphemy, and the People of *Judah* in the Extremity of Danger and Despair, *Isai.* xxxvii. It happening likewise, that this Invasion of the *Assyrian* Army was in the Year of Jubilee, the Enemy had ravaged and consum'd the Corn of the last Year, and by the Law concerning the Years of Jubilee, the *Jews* were commanded not to sow in those Years, (*Lev.* xxv. 11.) so that there was a miraculous Provision promised and accordingly made them, of two Years Sustenance, without their own Care or Labour, 2 *Kings* xix. 29. At the Prayer of *Isaiah*, the Sun went back ten Degres, for a Sign to King *Hezekiah* of his Recovery: and the Princes of *Babylon* sent Embassadors to enquire of this [f] Wonder, 2 *Kings* xx. 11. 2. *Chron.* xxxii. 31. *Isai.* xxxix. 1.

It was impossible there should be any Mistake in Miracles of this nature, which have the same Evidence that those of *Moses* himself had, having the

[d] Hieron. in Esai. c. vii. & in Zech. c. xiv.

[e] Joseph. Antiq. l. 9. c. 11.

[f] *Quia apud eos (Chaldæos) astrorum observantia est, stellarumq; cursus longo usu & exercitatione cognitus, intellexerunt solem reversum, Diei spatia duplicata, servire ei, quem solum Deum putabant. Cumq; causas hujus miraculi, rationemq; perquirerent, famâ per omnes Gentes volitante, didicerunt propter ægrotationem Regis Juaæ. etiam cursum sigui clarissimi mutatum.* Hieronym. *in* Isai. xxxix. 1.

joint

joint Testimony of a whole People to prove the Truth of them.

Isaiah foretold the Destruction of the Kingdom of *Israel*, with the set time of it; *Within threescore and five years shall Ephraim be broken, that it be not a people*, Isai. vii. 8. [g] The exact fulfilling whereof the *Jews* prove, by computing from the twenty fifth Year of *Uzziah*'s Reign, which was the Year of the Earthquake, mention'd, *Amos*. i. 1. which they say attended the Judgment inflicted upon *Uzziah*, for usurping the Priest's Office. The Desolation foretold by him of *Babylon* is attested by * Eye-witnesses to be fulfilled in all Particulars, *chap*. xiii. 19. "† All the Ground "on which *Babylon* was spread, is left now desolate, "nothing standing in that *Peninsula*, between the "*Euphrates* and the *Tigris*, but only part, and that "a small part of the great Tower, which God hath "suffered to stand (if Man may speak so confidently "of his great impenetrable Counsels) for an Eternal Testimony of his great Work in the Confusion of Man's Pride; and that Ark of *Nebuchadnezzar*, for a perpetual a Memory of his great "Idolatry, and condign Punishment; nothing else "shewing the Figure of any thing, which hath been "either of Ornament or of Greatness, or of Place "inhabited. So truly doth God judge the huge "Sins of the World, and maintaineth so justly the "Credit of his Messengers, that though they speak "great things, they never speak vain things."

After the Death of *Alexander*, *Babylon* was little regarded, but fell to decay, 'till it became quite desolate. *Strabo* applies to *Babylon*, what had been said

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g Euseb. & Hieron. *in* Esai. vii. 8. Isai. xiii. 19. *Rauwolf*'s Travels, c. 7. *Travels into* Persia, p. 21.

* Hieron. Comment *in*

† *Sir* Ant. Sherley's

of *Megalopolis* in *Arcadia*. [h] *The Great City is a great Ruine.* And with him agree, *Diodorus Siculus*, *Pausanias*, and *Pliny*.

Isaiah prophesied of *Cyrus* by Name [i] two hundred and ten Years before the Accomplishment of his Prophecy; and foretold the Rebuilding of the Temple, an hundred and forty Years before it was demolished. The Expressions describing his Conquests are so plain, and full, that as St. *Jerom* [k] observes, the History of *Cyrus*, by *Xenophon*, is an admirable Comment upon this Prophecy of *Isaiah*, *That saith of Cyrus*, *He is my Shepherd*, *and shall perform all my pleasure*, *even saying to Jerusalem*, *Thou shalt be built*; *and to the temple*, *Thy Foundation shall be laid. Thus saith the Lord to his Anointed*, *to Cyrus*, *whose right hand I have holden*, *to subdue Nations before him: And I will loose the loins of kings*, *to open before him the two-leaved gates*, *and the gates shall not be shut. I will go before thee*, *and make the crooked places straight. I will break in pieces the gates of brass*, *and cut in sunder the bars of Iron*; *and I will give thee the treasures of darkness*, *and hidden riches of secret places. He shall build my city*, *and he shall let go my captives*, *not for price nor reward*, *saith the Lord of Hosts*, Isa. xliv. 28. and xlv. 1, 2, 3, 13. And this *Cyrus* himself, tho' an Heathen Prince, was so sensible of, that he acknowledged it in his *Proclamation* which he put forth for the Building the Temple: *Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia*, *All the kingdoms of the earth hath the Lord God of Heaven given me*, *and he hath charged me to build him an house in Jerusalem*, *which is in Judah*, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 23. Ezra i. 2. And the Circumstances of the Birth, Edu-

[h] Ἔρημια μεγαλη ἐστιν ἡ μεγαλη πολις. Strabo, lib. 16. p. 1073. Αὐτης δ' Βαβυλωνος νυν βραχυ τι μερος οἰκειται· το δὲ πλειστον οὖλος τειχος γεωργειται. Diodor. Sic. lib. 2. initio, p. 73. Οὐδεν ἐτι ἠν ἐστιν ἡ μη τειχος. Pausan. in Arcad. p. 264. leg. ἐτι νυν. In solitudinem rediit. Plin. Hist. l. 6. c. 26.

[i] Joseph. Antiq. l. 11. c. 1.

[k] Hieron. ad Isai. c. 44.

cation

cation and Advancement of *Cyrus*, were so far from having any thing in them, that looked towards the fulfilling these Prophecies, that they all seemed extremely to make against it, and did thereby wonderfully manifest the Divine Wisdom and Power in the Prophecies, and in the Accomplishment of them. "For there is no Historian (says [l] Sir *W. Raleigh*, "speaking of the Conquest of *Babylon*,) who was "either present at this Victory of *Cyrus*, or that re-"ceived the Report from others truly, as it was, that "could better leave the same to Posterity, after it "happened, than *Esay* hath done in many Places of "his Prophecies, which were written two hundred "Years before any thing attempted." And the same Prophet who foretold the Empire of *Cyrus* the *Persian*, foretold likewise, That the Kingdom of the *Chaldæans* should be destroyed by the *Medes*, Isa. xiii. 17. And it was prophesied by *Jeremiah*, that it should be destroyed by the *Kings of the Medes*, Jer. li. 11, 28. And this is the more remarkable, [m] because though *Darius Medus* conquer'd *Babylon*, yet he dying soon after, and *Cyrus* succeeding him, the Fame of *Cyrus*, who was, at the taking of *Babylon*, but General of his Army, so obscured the Name and Memory of *Darius*, that Historians have taken no notice of him; though he is found mention'd by the *Scholiast*, upon [n] *Aristophanes*, who says, that a *Darius*, who was before him that was Father of *Xerxes*, gave Name to the pieces of Coin call'd Δαρεικοι, who must be *Darius Medus*. So much better were Transactions known to the Prophets before-hand, than to Historians afterwards. The Judgments which were to befal divers other Nations, were also foretold by *Isaiah*, and described by particular Circumstances: He pro-

[l] L. 3. Part. 1. c. 3. § 5. [m] See Sir *W. Raleigh*, l. 3. c. 2. § 2
[n] Aristoph. Concionant. Suid. vid. Δαρεικος.

phesied

phesied of the Overthrow of *Tyre* by *Alexander the Great*; *From the land of Chittim it is revealed to them*, Isa. xxiii. 1. The Land of *Chittim* is *Macedonia*, 1 Mac. i. 1. viii. 5. And *Isaiah* expressly calls *Tyre an Island*, xxiii. 2, 6. and therefore must mean that *Tyre* which was taken by *Alexander*; tho' it were not yet built, but rose out of the Ruins of *Tyre* on the Continent, which *Nebuchadnezzar* destroyed, according to *Ezekiel*'s Prophecy. The Destruction of *Nineveh* [o] was foretold by the Prophet *Nahum*, an hundred and fifteen Years before-hand. "[p] *Nineveh* (that which "God himself called *that Great City)* hath not one "Stone standing, which may give the Memory of "the Being of a Town: one English Mile from it, "is a place called *Mosul*, a small thing, rather to be "a Witness of the other's Mightiness, and God's "Judgment, than of any Fashion of Magnificence in "it self.

The Prophet *Jeremiah* foretold the Conquests of *Nebuchadnezzar*, and the Captivity of the *Jews* by him, in so remarkable and solemn a manner, that it was notorious to all the neighbouring Nations: For, according to the Custom of delivering Prophecies by some visible Signs, as well as in Words, he sent Bonds and Yokes *to the king of Edom, and to the king of Moab, and to the king of the Ammonites, and to the king of Tyrus, and to the king of Zidon, by the hand of the messengers which came to Jerusalem* (from these several Kings) *unto Zedekiah king of Judah*; and foretold, That *all these Nations should serve Nebuchadnezzar, and his son, and his sons son*, Jer. xxvii. 3, 7. And the *Jews* put him in Prison for his Prophecy; where he was kept when *Nebuchadnezzar* took the City, and set him at liberty. And when the *Chaldæans* had raised the Siege,

[o] Joseph. Antiq. l. 9. c. 11. Νινος πολις ηφανισθη παραχρημα μη την των Συρων κατακλυσιν, Strabo, l. 16. p. 1071.

[p] *Sir* Ant. Sherley's *Travels into* Persia, p. 21.

by

by reason of *Pharaoh*'s Army, which was coming to the Relief of *Jerusalem*; *Jeremiah* told the *Jews*, That *Pharaoh*'s Army should return into *Ægypt*, without effecting any thing; and that the *Chaldæans* should come again, and take the City, and *burn it with fire*, Jer. xxxvii. 5. He likewise propheſied againſt *Ægypt*, which the *Jews* made their Refuge and Sanctuary; and pointed out the very Place where *Nebuchadnezzar* would pitch his Tent, by taking great Stones, and hiding them in the Clay, *at the entry of* Pharaoh's *House* Tahpanhes, *in the ſight of the Men of Judah*; declaring, That *his throne ſhould be ſet upon thoſe ſtones*, and *he ſhould ſpread his royal pavilion over them*, Jer. xliii. 9, 10. It is obſervable that *Jeremiah*, when he might have gone to *Babylon*, and lived in Safety and Honour there, choſe rather to remain in his own Country, and perſiſt in the diſcharge of his Office; and when he was conſtrained to go into *Ægypt*, he ſtill retain'd the ſame Zeal and Spirit of Prophecy. And the Accompliſhment of his Prophecy concerning *Pharaoh*, chap. xliv. 30. is to be ſeen in [q] *Herodotus*.

The Prophet *Jeremiah* was oppoſed and contradicted by ſeveral Falſe Prophets, who propheſied deceitfully and flattering Deluſions to the People, perſuading them, that no Evil ſhould come upon them; of whom *Jeremiah* foretold, That *Hananiah* ſhould die that ſame Year in which he vented his falſe Prophecies, *chap.* xxviii. 16, 17. and, That *Ahab* the Son of *Kolaiah*, and *Zedechiah* the Son of *Maaſeiah*, ſhould be taken Captive by *Nebuchadnezzar*, and ſlain in the ſight of the People of *Judah*, and roaſted in the Fire, *chap.* xxix. 21, 22. And thus diſtinctly foretelling the Time and Manner of the Death of thoſe falſe Prophets, he vindicated his own Prophecies, which were at firſt ſo unwillingly believed, beyond all Contradiction.

[q] Herodot. Euterp. c. 169.

Put

But that which seemed most strange, and was most objected against in the Prophecies of *Jeremiah*, was his Prophecy concerning the Death of *Zedechiah*; for in this, [r] He and *Ezekiel* were thought to contradict each other. *Jeremiah* prophesied in *Jerusalem* at the same time when *Ezekiel* prophesied in *Babylon*, and concerning the same things; and *Jeremiah*'s Prophecy was sent to the Captives in *Babylon*, and *Ezekiel*'s to the Inhabitants of *Jerusalem*. But *Jeremiah* said, *Thine eyes shall behold the eyes of the king of Babylon, and he shall speak with thee mouth to mouth, and thou shalt go to Babylon. Yet hear the word of the Lord, O Zedekiah king of Judah, Thus saith the Lord of thee, Thou shalt not die by the sword; but thou shalt die in peace: and with the burnings of thy fathers, the former kings which were before thee, so shall they burn odours for thee, and they will lament thee, saying, Ah, Lord! for I have pronounced the word, saith the Lord*, Jer. xxxiv. 3, 4, 5. But *Ezekiel* prophesied in these Words; *I will bring him to Babylon, to the land of the Chaldæans: yet shall he not see it, though he shall die there*, Ezek. xii. 13. Now these two Prophets writing of the Captivity of *Zedekiah*, reckon up all the Circumstances of it between them, in such a manner, as that they were believed to contradict each other; and thereby the Expectation and Attention of the People was the more excited to observe the Fulfilling of their Prophecies. *Jeremiah* said, That he should see the King of *Babylon*, and be carried to *Babylon*: *Ezekiel*, That he should not see *Babylon*. *Jeremiah*, That he should die in peace, and be buried after the manner of his Ancestors: *Ezekiel*, That he should die at *Babylon*. And if we compare all this with the History, nothing ever was more punctually fulfilled: For *Zedekiah* saw the King of *Babylon* who,

[r] Joseph. Antiq. l. 10. c. 10. Hieron. ad Ezek. c. 12.

commanded

commanded his Eyes to be put out, before he was brought to *Babylon*; and he died there, but died peaceably, and was suffered to have the usual Funeral Solemnities, 2 *Kings* xxv. 6, 7. And therefore both Prophecies proved true in the Event, which seemed before to be inconsistent. And so critical an Exactness in every minute Circumstance, in Prophecies delivered by two Persons, who were before thought to contradict each other, was such a conviction to the *Jews*, after they had seen them so punctually fulfilled, in their Captivity, that they could no longer doubt but that both were from God.

Jeremiah foretold also, That the Kingdom of the *Chaldæans* should be destroyed, and that the *Jews* should be restored, after a Captivity of seventy Years: *These nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years: And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the Lord, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldæans*, Jer. xxv. 11, 12. *For thus saith the Lord, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon, I will visit you, and perform my good word towards you, in causing you to return to this place*, Jer. xxix. 10. And upon this Prophecy of *Jeremiah* the *Jews* depended, under the Captivity, *Dan.* ix. 2. *Zech.* i. 12. and it was exactly fulfilled to them. He foretold, that the Vessels of the Temple should be brought back again at the coming of the *Jews* out of their Captivity in *Babylon*, chap. xxvii. 22. And it was the particular Care of *Cyrus*, *Darius* and *Artaxerxes*, that they should be returned, *Ezra* i. 7. vi. 5. vii. 19. He bought a Field of *Hanameel* his Uncle's Son, and the Evidences of the Purchase, which were subscribed in the sight of many Witnesses, were delivered to *Baruk*, to be preserved in an Earthen Vessel, as a Token of the Peoples return out of Captivity, and to be produced at their Return in confirmation of his Prophecies, *Jer.* xxxii. 9. The Generations

ons of *Nebuchadnezzar*'s Posterity, that should succeed him, till the Destruction of that Monarchy, are foretold, *Jer.* xxvii. 7. The Destruction of *Babylon*, with the manner of taking the City, as it was foretold and described by the Prophet, agrees punctually with the Account of it by [s] *Herodotus* and *Xenophon*. *One post shall run to meet another, and one messenger to meet another, to shew the king of Babylon that his City is taken at one end, and that the passages are stopped, and the reeds they have burned with fire, and the men of war are affrighted.* Which should be in time of Feasting and Drunkenness. And this was declared in a memorable and solemn manner, by writing it down, and by casting the Book into *Euphrates*, Jer. li. 31, 32, 39, 57, 62, 63. The Historians inform us, that the City of *Babylon* being provided with all Necessaries to endure a Siege for many Years, *Cyrus* order'd the Banks of the River to be cut, and the Waters to be drained, till it became fordable, and then surprised the City by the Chanel, both at the Entrance of the River into the City, and at its Passage out again. And this Stratagem he contrived to execute on a Festival, when the People, without any Apprehension of Danger, were entertaining themselves with Dancings and other Diversions: And his Soldiers at the same time entring the most distant places of so great a City; both Ends were taken, before they that dwelt in the midst of the City, knew of it. So that Messengers were sent from both parts of the City, in great haste and confusion, to inform the King, that *his City was taken at the End*, that is, by a common *Hebraism* at each end or [t] from End to End; for *one* is not in the *Hebrew*, [illegible] is added by our Translators in a different Character [illegible] which is the same thing, each Mes-

[s] Herodot. C[illegible] [illegible]91. Xenoph. Inst. Cyri. l. 7. Herodotus *was born within th[illegible]ars of the Time, and* Xenophon *not very long after. Bishop [illegible]ster.*

[t] A summo u[illegible]mmum. Vers. vulgat.

senger

senger should tell the King, that his City was taken at *one end.* That they should run from each end, the Prophet plainly foretels, in saying, that they should meet one another. [v] *Aristotle* says, it was reported, that the City had been taken three Days before the People in all parts of the City knew of it.

Jeremiah also propheſied, That the *Seed of Israel* should never *cease from being a Nation* to the End of the World; which we see fulfilled in their continuing a distinct Nation, tho' dispers'd in all parts of the World, *Jer.* xxxi. 36.

The Destruction of *Tyre* and *Zidon*, and of *Egypt*, was foretold by the Prophet *Ezekiel*; and the Restoration of the *Ægyptians*, after forty Years, *Ezek.* xxviii. 19. and xxix. 12, 13. As *Isaiah* had foretold the Destruction of the latter *Tyre* by *Alexander*, long before it had any Being; so *Ezekiel* propheſied, that *Nebuchadnezzar* should destroy *Palætyrus*, or *Tyre*, on the Continent, but situate *at the entry of the sea*, Ezek. xxvii. 3. which was never to be rebuilt, *chap.* xxvi. 14, 21. xxvii. 36. But *Tyrus* in the Isle had its Rise from the Ruins of this. The Prophet says, that this *Tyre* was *strong in the sea*, chap. xxvi, 17. that its *borders were in the midst of the seas*, chap. xxvii. 4. which a [w] learned Author understands of its Maritime Power. And whereas the Prophet afterwards adds, that this *Tyre* was *made very glorious in the midst of the seas*, ℣ 25. that *the east-wind had broken her in the midst of the seas*, ℣ 26. and that this Lamentation should be made over her, *What city is like Tyrus, like the destroyed in the midst of the sea?* ℣ 32. The same Author understands these, and other Expressions of the like Nature, to be spoken allegorically. But they seem rather to imply, that the City, tho' standing on the Continent, was in great measure encompassed by the Sea, being situate on a Rock, (as the name *Tzor* signifies)

[v] Arist. Polit. l. 3. c. 2. [w] Marsham. Canon. § 18.

nifies) or a large Promontory reaching into the Sea. *Ezekiel* foretold the desolate estate of *Ægypt* for forty Years, and that, tho' at the end of that time, the *Ægyptians* should return from the Captivity, yet *they should be a base Kingdom: It shall be the basest of the Kingdoms, neither shall it exalt itself any more above the Nations. For I will diminish them, that they shall no more rule over the Nations*, Ezek. xxix. 12. Which Prophecy has been most remarkably fulfilled. For after the Conquest of *Ægypt* it never has been an independent Kingdom, but subject to the *Persians*, then to the *Macedonians*, afterwards to the *Romans*, next to the *Saracens*, and now to the *Turks*. And during that Interval of Revolt from the *Persians*, they were still, as *Ezekiel* foretold, a *base Kingdom*. *Alexander the Great*'s Victory at the River *Granicus*, his Vanquishing *Darius*, and his Conquests of the *Medes* and *Persians*, and the Division of his Empire, after his Death, between *Ptolemæus Lagi*, *Philip* or *Aridæus* the Brother of *Alexander*, *Seleucus Nicanor*, and *Antigonus*, are first allegorically described, and then explain'd, by the Angel *Gabriel*.

The Prophanation of the Temple, and of the Sanctuary, by *Antiochus Epiphanes*, with the Death of *Antiochus*, and a Description of his Temper, and of his very Countenance, was clearly delivered by *Daniel*, four hundred and eight Years [x] before the Accomplishment, *Dan.* viii. *Daniel* likewise described the Fate of the four Monarchies, the Restoration of the *Jews*, and the Rebuilding of their City, and the Birth and Death of the *Messias*, with the precise Time of both, and of the Destruction of the City and the Sanctuary. And *Alexander the Great* is said [y] to have been encourag'd by *Daniel*'s Prophecy, in his Expedition. Indeed, his Prophecy, and the History of the four

[x] Joseph. Antiq. l. 12. c. 11.

[y] Ibid. l. 11. c. 8.

Monarchies,

Monarchies, are so exactly parallel, that [z] *Porphyry* could find no other Evasion, but to say, That the Book of *Daniel* was written after the Events: Which, as *Grotius* observes, is as absurd, as if a Man should maintain, that the Works of *Virgil* were not written under *Augustus*, but after his time: For the Book of *Daniel* was as publick, and as much dispers'd, and as universally received, as ever any Book could be.

Lastly, *Haggai* and *Malachi* prophesied, That *Christ* should come before the Destruction of the Second Temple, *Hag.* ii. 7, 9. *Mal.* iii. 1. *Hosea* foretold the present State of the People of *Israel*, in those remarkable Words, *They shall be wanderers among the nations*, Hos. ix. 17. And *Amos*, in a more particular manner declared, That *the sinful Kingdom* should be destroyed, but that the *House of Jacob* should be preserved: *I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob, saith the Lord; for lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth*, Amos ix. 8, 9. After the Destruction of their Kingdom and Government, and the Dispersion of the People into all Parts of the Earth, they were still to remain a separate People, distinguished from those among whom they lived.

Not to insist therefore upon other Miracles and Prophecies, which were concerning things of lesser Moment, or less remarkable in the Eyes of the World; these may suffice, which were of that publick nature that there could be no Deceit or Mistake in them: Multitudes of Men, whom Prejudice or Malice had prepared to make the utmost Discoveries, were Witnesses to the Miracles; and both the Prophecies themselves, and the fulfilling of them, were notorious to other Nations, as well as to the *Jews*, to whom they were deliver'd, and in whose hands they have ever

[z] Hieron. in Dan. Procem. Vid. Hieron. ad Dan. viii.

since been, being read in the Synagogues every *Sabbath-day*. The *Jews* had as good Evidence, for instance, that *Elijah* wrought his Miracles, as they could have, that there was such a Man in the World. And when the publick Transactions and Councils of Princes, the Fate and Revolution of Empires, with the prefix'd Time and Place, and the very Names of the Persons, were so particularly foretold, two or three hundred Years before the Things came to pass; we may as well question the Truth of all History, as the Certainty of these Revelations: For indeed, they are the History of Things that were to come, set down in the very Circumstances in which they afterwards were brought to pass. And yet if a Man should dispute whether there ever were such a Man as *Elijah*, or such a Prince as *Josiah*, or *Cyrus*, he would but make himself ridiculous; but if he deny that *Elijah* wrought such Miracles, or that *Isaiah* spoke of *Cyrus*, and another Prophet of *Josiah*, by Inspiration, perhaps he may be thought to have made some great Discovery, and to know something above the rest of Mankind, and shall be likely to meet with Applause, instead of that Contempt which such Pretences deserve: So strangely partial are Men for any thing which is but against the Authority of the Scriptures. For I think it will be hard for Men to bring better Proof, that there were such Men as *Elijah*, and *Josiah*, and *Cyrus*, than may be brought to shew, that the latter were by Name prophesied of long before their Birth, and that the first wrought all the Miracles related of him; or to produce clearer Evidence, that there was such a City as *Jerusalem* before the Reign of *Cyrus*, than we have, that the Destruction of the City and Temple, and the Captivity of the People, with their Restoration after seventy Years, was foretold by *Jeremiah*.

The Prophets did their Miracles in the most publick manner; and their Prophecies were deliver'd, not

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in Corners, but openly, before all the People; not in obscure and ambiguous Words, but in plain Terms, with a particular Account of Persons, and Time, and Place: They were kept, they were read and studied by that very People, who at first as little regarded them, as any Man now amongst us can do, but slew the Prophets themselves, and rejected their Prophecies with Rage and Indignation; but were afterwards, by the Event of things, so fully convinced (which was likewise foretold, *Ezek.* xxxiii. 33.) of their Divine Inspiration and Authority, that they wholly depended and rely'd upon them, and liv'd in an uncomfortable Exile, upon the whole Hope and Expectation of seeing the rest of their Prophecies fulfill'd. And therefore, the Posterity of those who had slain the Prophets, had the highest Veneration for the Memory of these Prophets whom their Fore-fathers had kill'd; they built and adorn'd their Sepulchres, when it was so reproachful to them to erect Monuments of perpetual Acknowledgment, That they were *the Children of them which killed the Prophets*, Matth. xxiii. 31. And chose to die any Death, rather than renounce the Authority of their Books, or part with them, even when they had forsaken their Doctrine, and chang'd the Substance of their Religion, for vain Traditions, and superstitious Observances. They referr'd themselves to these Prophets, for the Authority of their Religion; and acknowledg'd, that they had neither Prophecies nor Miracles after the Captivity. For during the Captivity in *Babylon*, the False Prophets had lost all Reputation with the People, who found themselves so miserably disappointed in the deluding Hopes, which those Prophets, that set themselves in opposition to *Jeremiah* and *Ezekiel*, had given them. Those Prophets became a Curse and a Proverb of Reproach among the *Jews*, as *Jeremiah* had foretold, *Jer.* xxix. 22. And from that time, False Prophets never could gain Esteem

enough to vent their Prophecies, if they attempted it.

CHAP. XI.

Of the Dependence of the several Parts of the Scriptures upon each other; and that the Old Testament proves the New, and the New again proves the Old, as the Cause and the Effect.

IT is a thing altogether incredible, that the Inhabitants of so small a part of the World as *Judæa* is, should lay a Design of imposing upon the rest of Mankind, which could prove so successful for so many thousand Years together; and that they should be such Masters of Deceit, and the World so fond of receiving Revelations from them, that at last, tho' the greatest part of that People, disclaim'd the Books, which some few, and those the most unlearned among them, would impose for Inspired Writings; yet the Authority of these Books should be more acknowledg'd in all parts of the World, than those had ever been in which they all unanimously agreed, and the rest should be received for the sake of these, more than ever they had been upon their own Account; which is the Case of the Books of the Old and New Testament. If the *Jews* (even the meanest and most ignorant of them) could do this merely by their own Wit and Device, they must have a Genius superior to that of all Mankind besides. For what imaginable Reason is there, why the Oracles of all the Heathen Nations should never be much regarded, and now in a manner, utterly lost, and that the Books of the *Jews* should still be preserv'd in their full Authority,

thority; but the Power and Advantage of Truth in these, and the want of it in them?

And the Evidence of this Truth is most observable, in the mutual Dependence which all the Parts of the Scriptures have one upon another. They were penn'd by Men of different Countries, different Ages, different Conditions, and Callings, and Interests, from the King to the poor Fisherman, some by Prophets of *Judah*, and some by those of *Israel*, and others by Prophets born in *Chaldæa*; and yet all carry on the same Design: They are not like the Oracles of the Heathen Gods, which must stand or fall by themselves; but there is an admirable Series and Connexion between all the Writings of the Holy Scriptures, by which the several Parts of them give a mutual Support and Attestation to each other. The *Pentateuch* of *Moses* contains the first Lineaments, and evident Types and Prophecies of all that is contained in the rest: He foretold, That a Succession of Prophets should arise, and that there would likewise be False Prophets; He shew'd how they were to be discovered and distinguished from the True Prophets, and declared, that at last the *Great Prophet* should be sent, who is *Christ*; and he foretold all that was to befal the *Jews* from his own time, to the Destruction of *Jerusalem*. And as *Moses* has given us the general State of the *Jews*, for all Generations; so the several Prophets, who were sent from time to time, according to his Predictions, foretold particular Events, and more especially they foretold and described the Times of the Gospel. This was the great Design of all Prophecies, and the Thing that God had spoken by the Prophets, *which have been since the world began*, Luke i. 70. For in *Christ* was the Accomplishment of all the Types and Prophecies in the Old Testament.

And this Dependence and Coherence between all the Parts of the Scriptures, in the Matter and Design

of them, which is as great as the Dependence of one Part of any Book written by the same Author, can be upon another, gives great Strength and Confirmation to the whole; since it is an Evidence, that it was all inspired by the same infallible Spirit. And if one Part of Scripture be prov'd to be true, all must be so: For besides the particular Evidence which may be brought for any part separately, we must consider the Connexion which it has with the rest, and the Evidence which is derived upon it by this Connexion. If the *Pentateuch* be once proved to be of Divine Authority, then the Prophets who succeeded *Moses* must be divinely inspired; because he foretold the Succession of such Prophets: And if the Prophecies and Miracles of the Prophets were divine, the *Pentateuch* must be so; because they all along acknowledg'd and appeal'd to it, as containing God's Covenant with his People the *Jews*, and being therefore the Ground and Foundation of their own Mission. If *Moses* and the Prophets be from God, the Gospel must be from Him, if that be foretold by them: And if the Prophecies and Miracles of our Saviour and his Disciples prove their Divine Authority, the Writings of *Moses* and the Prophets must be likewise of the same Authority; because they acknowledge them for such, and prove their own Authority from them, as well as from the Miracles that they themselves wrought. And if the Prophecies and Miracles either of *Moses* or of the Prophets, or of our Saviour and his Apostles, taken by themselves, and apart from the rest, be sufficient, they must needs be more convincing, when they are considered together, in their united Force and Light.

I must farther observe, that Miracles without Prophecies, or Prophecies without Miracles, or that one evident Miracle, or one evident Prophecy; at least, That either the Miracles or Prophecies of some one

one Person, in the several Ages in which so many Prophets lived, would have been a sufficient ground of Faith, and that therefore they must all be much rather so in conjunction: But I shall only desire it may be remembred, That whatever Evidence has been brought in proof of the Divine Authority of the Books of *Moses*, and of the Prophets, doth reciprocally prove both the one and the other; and that therefore whatever is brought from either of them, in proof of the Gospel, has the Evidence of the whole; and that the Gospel in different respects doth prove them, and is proved by them, *both* deriving Authority from the Books of the Old Testament, and communicating its own Authority to them: For as the Cause may be proved by its Effect, and the Effect by its Cause; so both Predictions prove the Things foretold; and the Accomplishment of the Things foretold, verify the Predictions; and Miracles wrought in consequence of Prophecies concerning them, have doubly the Divine Seal and Attestation. Now, the *Messias* is the Scope and Centre of the whole Old Testament, as the *Jews* themselves ever understood it; and whatever Testimony is produced from thence, brings with it the Evidence of the whole: And a like Evidence is again reflected upon the whole Old Testament, by the Accomplishment of any part of it in the New, and by the Appeal which our Saviour and his Apostles constantly made to it.

CHAP. XII.

Of the Person of our Blessed Saviour.

THat in the Reign of *Tiberius*, there liv'd such a Person as *Jesus Christ*, who suffer'd [a] under *Pontius Pilate*, is expressly written by *Tacitus*; and that he cured Diseases, and wrought other Miracles, was never denied by the worst Enemies to the Christian Name and Doctrine. So that the Substance of the History of the Life and Death of our Saviour, is acknowledg'd by our very Adversaries, and the Power, by which he wrought his Miracles, is the thing which was in dispute between them and the Primitive Christians. And therefore I shall take the Observations which I make concerning our Blessed Saviour, from that Account which the Evangelists give of him, which is in great part confess'd by the Jews and Heathens, and which deserves at least the same Credit that all other Histories do, till it can be disproved; and in the following Chapters I shall shew, that it is infallibly true.

The Divine Nature of our Blessed Saviour is of another Consideration: We are in this Place to consider him, according to the Appearance he made in the World: And this was such as shew'd him to be void of all ambitious and aspiring Thoughts, and to be meek and humble, and perfectly virtuous and holy. His Miracles were wrought without Vanity or Ostentation, and never out of Revenge, or to shew his Power over his Enemies, but always with a gracious and merciful Design: He avoided all Opportunities of Popularity; he would not intermeddle in private Affairs, when he was appeal'd to; and made his Escape, when the

[a] *Vulgus Christianos appellabat. Auctor nominis ejus Christus, qui, Tiberio imperitante, per procuratorem Pontium Pilatum, supplicio affectus erat.* Tacit. Annal. l. 15. c. 44.

People

People would have taken him by force to make him a King, after they had seen the Miracle of the Loaves; by which it appeared, that he, who was able to sustain so many thousands in the Wilderness, might have made himself as great as he would, notwithstanding any Opposition. He suffered the Acclamations, and accepted of the *Hosanna*'s of the People, to fulfil a Prophecy concerning himself; but took so little Delight in these Applauses, that he wept over *Jerusalem*, when the *whole City was moved* at his Entrance, and nothing but Joy or Wonder had a place in any other's Thoughts, *Matt.* xxi. 10. *Luke* xix. 41.

He dealt freely and generously with his Disciples, not deluding them with vain Hopes, nor promising them great Matters, but checking their aspiring Thoughts, and telling them truly and plainly, that they were to expect nothing but Miseries in this World, from the Profession of his Doctrine. He put it to their own Choice, whether they would take up their Cross, and follow him; and when he was betray'd by one of these very Disciples, he uses no upbraiding or reproachful Language, but bespeaks him with a Divine Patience and Meekness: No Man ever suffer'd with so much Injustice and Cruelty, nor ever any Man with so great Compassion and Charity towards all his Enemies.

He lived a mean and despised Life, and never was in such a condition as could tempt any Man to flatter him, or to conceal any Fault, if he had been guilty of any; and he had always many Enemies, who endeavour'd to fasten the worst Calumnies upon him, but their Malice tended only to render his Innocence the more manifest and illustrious.

The Person who betrayed him, and delivered him into the Hands of his Enemies, was *one of the Twelve*, one of his own Disciples and Apostles, whom he had sent out to gain Proselytes, and had committed to him a Power

a Power of working Miracles, and of doing whatsoever was requisite to gain Reception for his Religion in the World. *Judas* was one of the Twelve, who were neareſt to him, and were admitted to all the Secrets of his Kingdom, and were entrusted with the most hidden Mysteries, and obscure Doctrines of his Religion; whatsoever was spoken to others in Parables, was explained afterwards to them in private; nothing was with-held from them, which it was convenient for them to be acquainted withal, or which they were capable of knowing. Nay, *Judas* seems to have had a particular Mark of Favour placed upon him, in that he was the Keeper of the Bag; for it was an Office of some Trust and Confidence: However it gave him an opportunity of knowing, whether his Master had any such ambitious Designs, as he was accused of. For if he had *perverted the Nation, and forbidden to give Tribute to Cæsar*, and had endeavourd to set himself up as King of the *Jews*, which was the Charge laid against him before *Pilate*, such a Project could not have been carried on without amassing a great Treasure; of which therefore if any such thing had been in hand, *Judas* had been best able to give an Account. But when one, who had constantly attended upon him, and was so intimately acquainted with all the Secrets of his Life and Doctrine, had nothing to alledge against him, after he had betrayed him, what could make more for his Justification, or be a clearer Demonstration of his Innocence? When Men are once prevail'd upon to turn Traytors, they seldom do things by halves, but if there be the least pretence or colour to be found, they will be sure to lay hold of it to justifie their Villany. And it is the most undeniable Proof of our Saviour's Innocence, that Treachery it self could discover nothing to fasten upon him: But tho' *Judas* had been suborned by the Chief Priests to betray his Master for thirty Pieces of Silver, yet neither that nor a greater Sum, (which we may

may be confident would not have been denied him) could prevail with *Judas* himself, to undertake to appear as a Witness against him.

When one of his own Disciples was perswaded, or rather had offered of his own accord to betray him, it could not be imagined, but that the Chief Priests would urge him to come in, as a Witness to the Accusations which they had framed against him. This had been a much more acceptable Service to them, than barely to deliver him up: For what could have brought a greater Disgrace upon his Person, or more Discredit upon his Religion, than for one of his own Disciples to witness against him, that he *had committed things worthy of death?* Men, who were at such a loss for matter to charge Christ with, and at last could not make their Witnesses agree together, would never, we may be sure, have omitted such an Opportunity as this of loading him with Infamy, and stifling his Doctrine in his Death. And he who was so ready and forward to betray his Master would never have stuck at accusing him if he had had any thing to say against him; and no other Reason can be given why he did not do it, but that he was over-awed by that Innocence and Holiness, which he knew to be in him, and was seized with such Remorse of Conscience and Terror of Mind, as not to be able to bear up under the Guilt of what he had already done. For *Judas, who had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of Silver to the Chief Priests and Elders, saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood: And they said, What is that to us, see thou to that. And he cast down the pieces of Silver in the Temple, and went and hanged himself*, Mat. xxvii. 3, 4. How could the Chief Priests themselves have contrived a better way to vindicate our Saviour's Innocence, if they had never so much endeavour'd it, than for one of his own Disciples, after he had betrayed him, instead of witnessing

witnessing against him, which it was natural to suppose he would have done, to be so far from that, as to come before them all, and fling down the Money in the Temple, which they had given him as the hire of his Treachery, and declare publickly, that he had betrayed the innocent Blood; and then to give a farther Proof of all this, out of mere Anguish and Horror of Mind, to go immediately from them, and hang himself?

If our Saviour had done any thing, whereby he could deserve to be put to Death, *Judas* must needs have known it; and when he had once betrayed him, it cannot be supposed he would forbear to discover any thing he knew of him. But when on the contrary he was so far from accusing him, that as soon as he saw him condemned at the Accusation of other false Witnesses, he could not bear the Agonies of his own Mind, but went and made away with himself; this is as evident a proof of Christ's Innocence, as any of the other Apostles themselves could ever give; and *Judas* is so far an Apostle still, as to proclaim his Master's Innocence in the Face of the *Sanhedrin*, and then to seal that Testimony with his Blood.

It has been thought * by some, that *Judas*, as wicked as he was, had never any Design to cause his Master to be put to death, or to be any way instrumental towards it; but he supposed that Christ would be secure enough against the Chief Priests in his own Innocence and Holiness, or that they would not dare to hurt him for fear of the People, which had been a Restraint upon them in their former Attempts; or that he could easily make his Escape from them, as he had formerly done, and therefore his Covetousness tempted him to believe, that though he should betray his Master, yet he would come to no harm by it. However, it is certain, that *Judas* himself cleared our Saviour's Innocence, by betraying him, more than any other

* Theophyl. in Matt. xxvii.

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Man could have done, who had not been his Disciple: And his making that Confession, and then his dying upon that Account, and in that Manner, may afford us an Evidence, which we must have wanted, to certifie us in the Truth of the Christian Religion, if *Christ* had not been betrayed, or had been betrayed by any but one of his own Disciples.

When he was condemned and crucified, one of the Thieves, who was crucified with him, made an open Profession of him; when there could be no Temptation of Flattery, nor Leisure or Patience for a Man in that condition to speak in that manner, but by the special Providence and Grace of God: And to give an early instance of the great Efficacy of his Cross, and of the Mercy, which it reacheth forth to all repenting Sinners, our Saviour assures him, that that very Day he *should be with him in Paradise.* A strange Discourse upon the Cross! To speak of Kingdoms, and promise Paradise under so much Infamy and Torment! That one should have the Faith to ask, and the other the Power to promise so great things in that Condition! Who could have had the Courage to promise so much upon the Cross, but he, who was able to perform it?

And as no Ill could ever be proved against him, but all Circumstances concurred to confirm his Innocence; as *Herod* dismissed him, and *Pilate* often declared him to have committed nothing worthy of Death; so the Devils themselves, during his Life here upon Earth, confessed him to be the Son of God, and after his Death, [b] by their Oracles acknowledged him to have been an holy Person, whose Soul was translated into Heaven.

And this Person, thus innocent and holy both in his Life and Doctrine, was prophesied of many Ages

[b] Porphyr. apud Euseb. Demonstra. Evang. lib. 3. c. 6. & Aug. de Consensu Evangel. lib. 1. c. 15.

before

before his Birth, and all the Prophecies concerning the *Messias* were exactly in a wonderful manner fulfilled in him. These Prophecies concern either his Birth, or his Life, or his Death, or his Resurrection and Ascension.

I. The Prophecies concerning the Birth of the *Messias* were fulfilled in our Saviour. For his Birth was propheſied of in all the Circumſtances of the time, and the place of it, and the Perſon of whom he was born.

(1.) As for the Time; by *Jacob*'s Prophecy (*Gen.* xlix. 10.) the *Messias* was to come about the time of the Diſſolution of the Jewiſh Government. The *Sceptre was not to depart from Judah*, that is, the Power and Authority of the Jewiſh Government was not to ceaſe, *until Shilo came*, which the ancient [c] Jewiſh Interpreters expounded of the coming of their *Messias*.

To [d] which purpoſe it is held by the *Jews*, that the great *Sanhedrin* ſat in the Tribe of *Judah*, though but part of the Court in which they ſat belonged to that Tribe, and the reſt was in the Tribe of *Benjamin*. And the *Jews*, among all their Objections, never objected againſt the time in which our Saviour came into the World; but many of them have confeſſed that the *Messias* was born at that time; and ſay, that becauſe of their Sins, he has [e] concealed himſelf ever ſince. And the latter *Jews* have, by a great many Stories, endeavoured to make it believed, that there is a Kingdom ſtill of their Nation, in ſome unknown part of the World; tho', if this were true, it could prove nothing to their purpoſe, the Prophecy being concerning their Power and Authority in the promiſed Land, the Borders whereof are there mentioned by *Jacob*, ℣ 13.

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[c] *See Biſhop* Pearſon *on the Creed.*
[d] Lightfoot *Proſpect of the Temple.* c. 21.
[e] Munſter Meſſia.

It

It is certain, that soon after our Saviour's coming, *Jerusalem* was destroyed, and the *Jews* dispersed, and upon severe Penalties forbidden to come to their desolate and ruined City, or so much as to look upon [f] *Zion*, the City of their Solemnities, unless it were once every Year to lament their Calamity; and they have ever since been a wandring and despicable People. And several times, when they have attempted to rebuild their Temple, they have not been suffered to do it; particularly, when they had the Favour and Encouragement of *Julian* the Apostate; who, out of malice to the Christian Name and Doctrine, was forward to promote the Work, they were hindred by an Earthquake, and a miraculous Eruption of Fire bursting out near the Foundation, which burnt down what they had erected, and destroyed those that were employed in it; and this we have attested not only from Christian Writers, who lived near that time, [g] but by an eminent Heathen Historian of the same Age. Now it was foretold by the Prophets *Haggai* and *Malachi*, that Christ should come before the Destruction of the Second Temple, and the Destruction of this Temple

[f] Hieron. in Sophon. c. 1. Greg. Nazian. Orat. xii. p. 202. Just. Apol. 1. Tertull. Apol. c. 21. Euseb. Hist. l. 4. c. 4. & in Esai. vi. 11. *Διο ἐις ἐτι και σημερον ἀμφι μεν τους οἰκους και κυκλω θεουλες πορρωθεν ἰσανσι, μηδ' ἐξ ὀπτιλα το παλαι νενομισμενον αὐτοις ἱερον ἐδαφος θεασασθαι καταξιωμενοι· ἐξωθεν δε κυκλωνλες πιτνειν ἐπαγουσι τη μελα χειρας λεγουσι γραφη.* Euseb. in Psal. lviii. 7. p. 267. Rursus in eand. rem ad Psal. lxix. 26. p. 382.

[g] *Ambitiosum quondam apud Hierosolymam Templum, quod post multa & internecina certamina, obsidente Vespasiano posteaque Tito, ægre est expugnatum, instaurare sumptibus cogitabat (Julianus immodicis, negotiumque maturandum Alypio dederat Antiochensi, qui olim Britannias curaverat pro Præfectis. Cùm itaque rei idem fortiter instaret Alypius, juvaretque Provinciæ Rector, metuendi globi flammarum prope fundamenta crebris assultibus erumpentes, fecere locum exustis aliquoties operantibus inaccessum, hoque modo Elemento destinatius repellente, cessavit inceptum.* Ammian. Marcellin. l. 23. c. 1.

was

was foretold by *Daniel*, with the precise time of our Saviour's coming; and to manifest to the World that Christ is come, and that therefore the Jewish Worship and Government is utterly at an end, as the Prophets had foretold, God has been pleased in so miraculous and terrible a manner to shew, that he will not suffer their Temple to be rebuilt; and whereas the *Messias* was to come to the second Temple, now for so many hundreds of Years, they have had no Temple at all for him to come to.

(2.) As the time of Christ's Birth was foretold by the Prophets, so was the place likewise; and that was *Bethlehem*, a small City, and therefore the more unlikely in all humane Account to have that Honour bestowed upon it, to become the Birth-place of him, who, the *Jews* expected, should be a Temporal Prince: Yet this was so well understood by the *Jews* of that time, notwithstanding their mistaken Notion of a Temporal *Messias*, that *when Herod gathered all the Chief Priests and Scribes of the People together, and demanded of them, where Christ should be born*, they answered him with one consent, *in Bethlehem of Judæa*, and quoted the Prophecy of *Micah* for the Proof of it, *Matt.* ii. And many believe that *Jesus* was the *Messias*, or the *Christ*, of whom they were then in Expectation; others made this Objection, that he could not be the Christ, because he came out of *Galilee:* but *hath not the Scripture said, that Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was?* This was the great Objection against our Saviour, that he could not be the *Christ*, because he did not come out of *Bethlehem*, but out of *Galilee:* For they thought he had been born at *Nazareth* in *Galilee*, not at *Bethlehem* in the Tribe of *Judah*; whereas he was indeed born at *Bethlehem*, and that by so strange and particular a Providence, as doth evidently prove him to be the *Christ*.

For

For *it came to pass in these days, that there went out a Decree from Cæsar Augustus, that all the World should be taxed*, and registred according to their Families; and *all went to be taxed, every one into his own City*, into the City, which belonged to his Lineage and Family. *And Joseph also went up from Galilee out of the City of Nazareth into Judea unto the City of David, which is called Bethlehem (because he was of the House and Lineage of David) to be taxed with Mary his espoused Wife, being great with Child; and so it was, that while they were there, the Days were accomplished, that she should be delivered*, Luke, ii. 1, *&c.* Here we see, that their going from *Nazareth* to *Bethlehem* was not in the least designed by the Virgin *Mary* and *Joseph*, but they were oblig'd to go thither by a new and strange Decree of the Emperor, and accordingly they went in Obedience to this Decree. If the Blessed Virgin had dwelt at *Bethlehem*, though the Prophecy had been fulfilled, yet there had been nothing in the Circumstances extraordinary; if she had gone thither of her own accord, or if some private Business had called her thither, this might have been looked upon as a Contrivance, and a Design to be thought the Mother of the *Messias*; if God himself had by an immediate Revelation sent her thither, yet this still had been liable to Cavils, and might have been suspected of Imposture. But when at the Command of an Heathen Prince, and such a Command as had never been given out at any time before, the Virgin *Mary* was forced upon a long and tedious Journey, at an unseasonable time of the Year, being then great with Child, and therefore very unfit for such a Journey, and not in a Condition to have the least Inclination or Thought of undertaking it, when she was obliged by so unexpected and unwelcome a Command to repair to *Bethlehem*, and was at that very time deliver'd of her Son; all these Circumstances so wonderfully concurring, have something more convincing in them, than can well be express'd.

And it hath been observed by learned and judicious Men, that this Tax or Regiſter was deſigned and begun in ſome parts of the Empire xxxviii Years before, but was hindred by Diſturbances which happened; upon which Account it is ſuppoſed, that anciently the *Spaniards* began their *Æra* xxxviii Years before the Computation of other Chriſtians, ſuppoſing that the Taxing had been in *Judæa* at the ſame time, that it was begun amongſt them ſo many Years ſooner; but the Divine Providence ſo order'd things, that it ſhould not be carried on then, but ſhould be deferted 'till that very time when *Chriſt* was to be born, that by this means *Bethlehem* might be the Place of his Birth.

And by the ſame ſpecial Providence it came to paſs, not only that this Prophecy was fulfilled concerning his being born at *Bethlehem*, but that it ſhould be regiſter'd in the Publick Records of the Empire; to which **Juſtin Martyr* and † *Tertullian* appeal for the proof of it, and ‖ St. *Chryſoſtom* mentions them as extant at *Rome* in his time, near four hundred Years after the Birth of our Saviour. And his being born there, proves that he was of the Seed of *David*, as it was propheſied that the *Meſſias* ſhould be: For the Decree required, that all ſhould reſort to the City of their Lineage or Family, and *Bethlehem* was the City of *David*. So that from our Saviour's being born at *Bethlehem*, and that by ſo remarkable a Providence,

* Κωμη δε τις ἐστι—ἐν ᾗ ἐγγυεθη Ἰησους Χριστος, ὡς και μαθειν δυναδε ἐκ τ ἀπογραφων τ γνωμμων ἐπι Κυρηνιυ τ ὑμετερυ ἐν Ἰυδαια πρωτυ γνομμυ ἐπιτροπυ. Juſtin. Mart. in Apolog. ad Antonin. Pium.

† *De cenſu Auguſti, quem teſtem fidelisſimum Dominicæ Nativitatis Romana Archiva cuſtodiunt.* Tertull. adv. Marcion. l. 4. c. 7. vid. c. 36. & adv. Jud. c. 9.

‖ Και τοις ἀρχαιοις τοις δημοτικ καμμοις καδιξιν ἐπι τ Ῥωμης ἐξεσιν ἐντυχονλα, και τον καιρον τ ἀπογραφ μαθονλα ἀκριβως εἰδεναι τον βελομμον. Chryſoſt. in Chriſti Natal. Tom. 5. Edit. Sav.

without any human Foresight or Design; we have two evident Proofs that he is the Christ, he was of the Seed of *David*, and was born at *Bethlehem*; and this was attested by the Publick Records, or Censual Tables at *Rome*, which were often appeal'd to for the Truth of it, and were remaining to be consulted for several hundred Years afterwards. [h] And the *Jerusalem Gemarists* do confess, that the *Messias* was born at *Bethlehem* before their times.

(3.) The Person of whom our Saviour was born, had been likewise foretold. For, not only the time of his Birth, that it was to be before the Destruction of the Temple; and the Place, that it was to be at *Bethlehem*; but the Tribe of which he was to be born, the Tribe of *Judah*; and the Family, the Family of *David* and the very Person, that she was to be a Virgin: all were particularly foretold by the Prophets, and accordingly expected at that time by the *Jews*.

Concerning the Tribe and Family of which our Saviour was born, I shall observe, that effectual Care was taken, by the Law of *Moses*, to keep a perpetual Distinction of their several Tribes and Families: For by the Law of Inheritances, no Inheritance could pass out of a Family, either by Sale of Lands (for every fiftieth Year was a Year of Redemption, and *every Man returned to his own possession, and every man to his own Family*, Lev. xxv. 10.) or by defect of Heirs Male; for if there were Daughters, they were to inherit; and if there were no Daughters, it was to pass to their nearest Kinsman, *Num.* xxvii. And the Daughters, who were Heiresses, were obliged to marry to one of their Father's Tribe and Family, *chap.* xxxvi. 8. But if a Man died without Children, his Brother or his next Kinsman was to raise up Seed unto the Deceased, and the First-born was to *succeed*

[h] Lightf. Chorograph. Centur. c. 51.

in the name of him that died without Issue, *Deut.* xxv. 5, 6. *Ruth* iii. 12. So that he had a Natural and a Legal Father, the Names of both which must be enroll'd in their Registers, to entitle him and his Heirs to their Inheritance. All which was appointed with a peculiar Regard to the *Messias*, that the Prophecies concerning his Tribe and Family might be known to be fulfill'd at his Birth.

The Genealogies of the *Jews* therefore were of two kinds; one of their Natural, and the other of their Legal Descent and Parentage; and we have both these Genealogies of our Saviour set down, the one by St. *Matthew*, and the other by St. *Luke*, which must be exactly the same with the Registers of the Genealogies then extant, which both in their publick [i] Records, and in their private Books, were kept with Care and Exactness, their Expectation of the *Messias* obliging them to it, and the Constitution of their Government necessarily requiring it. For all the Title and Claim they could have to their Inheritances, [k] entirely depended upon it; and they were so careful herein, that their Genealogies were preserv'd to the Destruction of *Jerusalem*. For this Reason, *all went to be taxed, every one into his own city*; because the publick Genealogical Tables were kept in each City, of the Families belonging to it. And if the Genealogies in St. *Matthew* and St. *Luke* had been different from those in the publick Registers, this had for ever silenc'd and extinguish'd all Pretences to our Saviour's being the *Messias*; but they being exactly the same, did prove, that the Prophecies concerning the *Messias*, were fulfill'd in him: For the Virgin *Mary* being the only Child of her Father, or at least having no Brother, it was lawful for her

[i] Lightfoot *on* Matth. i. 1.

[k] ——ἡ παρθένῳ παρεδίδοτο τῷ Ἰωσὴφ, κλήρων εἰς τοῦτο ἀναλαχοῦσαν αὐτῷ ἦκεν, Epiph. Hær. 78. n. 7. Ἔλαχε γὰρ κλήρῳ τὴν ἁγίαν παρθένον Μαριάμ. Ancorat. n. 60.

to

to be espoused to none out of her own Family; and therefore the Pedigree of *Joseph*, as was customary in such Cases, is set down; this shewing her Lineage and Family, as certainly as her own Pedigree could have done: For the poorest amongst the *Jews* observed the Law of Inheritances, as strictly as the rich; and even in Exile it was observed, as well as when they were in possession of their Inheritances, *Tob.* vi. 10, 11.

[l] *Isaiah* and *Jeremiah* had prophesied, that the *Messias* should be born of a Virgin; and [m] so their Prophecies had been understood by the *ancient* Jews. And that a Virgin should bear a Son, can seem to no Man incredible, who will but consider, that the God of Nature cannot be confined to the Laws of his own Institution; and that to make Man of the Dust of the Earth, or by other means than by natural Generation, as the first Man and Woman must certainly be made, whatever *Hypothesis* be admitted, is as unaccountable and as wonderful as this can be. But to make this Conception of the Blessed Virgin the more easily believed, the Birth of *Isaac*, when his Mother *Sarah* was old, and had been barren, and other Births of the like nature, were both Types of Christ's Birth, and an Evidence of the Power of God above the Course of Nature; particularly St. *John Baptist*, being born of a Mother who was both old and barren, was in this, as well as in other things, the Forerunner of Christ.

But this Virgin was to be espous'd to *Joseph*, a just and good Man, both that he might be a Security and Protection to her, and might be assisting to her, in her Care and Tenderness for the Blessed Infant; and likewise, that he who was most concern'd to make the Discovery, if it had been otherwise, might testifie to the World, that an Angel from Heaven

[l] *Isai.* vii. 14. *Jerem.* xxxi. 22.
[m] *See Bishop* Pearson *on the Creed.*

had satisfy'd him, that she was with Child of the Holy Ghost. *Jealousy*, the Wise Man says, *is the rage of a man, therefore he will not spare in the day of vengeance: he will not regard any ransom, neither will he be content, tho' thou givest him many gifts*, Prov. vi. 34, 35. And the Jewish Law, in this case, was as severe as any could well be: For a Virgin betroth'd, who had been thus found guilty, was to be stoned to Death, *Deut.* xxii. 23. And tho' *Joseph not being willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily*; yet this shews, that if it had prov'd, as he at first suspected, he was not a Man that would have been insensible of the Injury; and it is a good Evidence, that there was nothing to be objected, when there was nothing that Jealousy could object; and no Testimony could possibly have satisfy'd those who will not be satisfy'd; tho' *Joseph* himself testified, that the *Angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a Dream, saying, Joseph, thou Son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy Wife; for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.* And his carrying the Infant into *Ægypt*, at another Appearance of an Angel, and all his Behaviour, shews, that as he was the most competent Person to deliver this Message of the Angel to the World, so he was the most zealous and forward Asserter of this Article of our Faith.

And besides his first Suspicions, his other Prejudices and Discouragements must be so great, that nothing but a clear and undoubted Revelation could possibly remove them; he could expect nothing but Trouble and Danger to himself, he could not hope to be reputed the Father of the *Messias*, since the Prophets had foretold, that he was to be born of a Virgin. The Jews had this Notion of him, *When Christ cometh, no Man knoweth, whence he is*, Joh. vii. 27. And how should they be persuaded, that he was the Son of *Joseph?* Nothing could be more

contrary

contrary to the Expectation they had of the *Messias*, than that he should be a Carpenter's Son: This was thought by them a sufficient Reason to reject both his Doctrine and his Miracles: and *Joseph* had no cause to flatter himself that it would be otherwise. *Simeon* propheſied of Christ, that he was *set for a sign, which should be spoken against*; and *Herod* presently seeks to take away his Life by a terrible Massacre; yet *Joseph* was so well satisfy'd with the Angel's Revelation to him, and was so well assured of the Certainty of it; that he willingly exposed himself to all the Inconveniencies and Dangers, which he could not but see must be the necessary Consequence of it, and which he soon saw come so thick and violently upon him. *A Sword was to pierce through the Virgin's own Soul also.* But all the Hazards and the Sorrows, which were foretold them, and which accordingly they underwent, may abundantly convince us, that they could have no Design or Prospect of any Advantage, but of declaring the Truth, and that Salvation which was brought to them and to all Mankind by it.

Thus we see that both the Time and Place of our Saviour's Nativity, and the Person of whom he was born, are evident Proofs of his being the Christ. He was to be born whilst the second Temple stood, he was to be born at *Bethlehem*, and he was to be born of a Virgin of the Tribe of *Judah*, and of the Lineage of *David*; all which most exactly agree in the Birth of our Saviour.

II. The Prophecies concerning the Life of the *Messias*, were fulfill'd in our Saviour. The Meanness and Obscurity, and Sorrows of it are expreſs'd, *Isai.* liii. 2, 3, *For he shall grow up before him as a tender Plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness, and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted*

with grief, and we hid as it were our Faces from him, he was despised and we esteemed him not. His Meekness and Patience are described, *Isa.* xlii. 2, 3, 4. *He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street; a bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoaking Flax shall he not quench; he shall bring forth judgment unto truth; he shall not fail nor be discouraged, 'till he have set judgment in the earth, and the Isles shall wait for his Law.* His Abode was to be chiefly in *Galilee*, Isa. ix. 1. Matt. iv. 14. And accordingly, he was brought up at *Nazareth*, and dwelt at *Capernaum.* And those who have the greatest Name among the Apostles were *Galilæans*, Mat. iv. 18, 21. Joh. i. 44.

His Miracles are every where inculcated by the Prophets, and this was so well understood by the *Jews* of that time, that many of the People believed in him, upon the account of his Miracles, and said, *When Christ cometh, shall he do greater Miracles than these, which this man hath done?* Joh. vii. 31. And when St. *John Baptist* sent two of his Disciples to enquire of our Saviour, whether he were the Christ, he gives them no other Answer, but that they should acquaint *John* with what things they had *seen and heard, how that the blind saw, the lame walked, the lepers were cleansed, the deaf heard, the dead were raised, to the poor the Gospel was preached*, Luke vii. 22. which was the literal fulfilling of that Prophecy, *Isaiah* xxxv. 5, 6. And it was the very Character, which all the Prophets had given of the *Messias.* St. *John Baptist*, of whom *Josephus* gives a high Commendation, and whom all Men look'd upon as a Prophet, *Mat.* xxi. 26. had before declared *Jesus* to be the Christ, though he now sent two of his Disciples to enquire of him, not for his own, but for their Satisfaction, that they might be Witnesses, how the Prophecies were fulfilled in him. And both the Preaching and Baptism of *John* was preparatory to that-

that of Christ, and was foretold by the Prophets, *Isa.* xl. 3. *Mal.* iv. 5.

But besides the Record of *John*, the Holy Ghost gave witness to Christ, visibly descending upon him at his Baptism, with a Voice from Heaven, pronouncing the Words prophetically deliver'd before concerning the *Messias*, which were always understood by the *Jews* to be meant of him, *Matth.* iii. 13. And this Voice was again repeated, tho' not so publickly as before, at his Transfiguration, *Matth.* xvii. 5. 2 *Pet.* i. 17. And at a third time there came a Voice to him from Heaven, in the hearing of all the People, *John* xii. 28. By the *Hosanna*'s of the Multitude, and even of the Children, and by his driving the Buyers and Sellers out of the Temple, several known Prophecies concerning the *Messias*, were fulfill'd in him, *Matth.* xxi. 16. *Joh.* ii. 17.

III. The Types and Prophecies concerning the Death of the *Messias* were fulfilled in our Saviour. His Death was foretold both in the Writings of the Prophets, and by several Types or Actions which did represent and prefigure his Death, with the manner and Circumstances of it; and this was one kind of Prophesying, by the Resemblance of Actions and Things, as well as by Descriptions in Words. Thus *Abraham*'s offering up *Isaac*, was a Type of Christ's being offer'd upon the Cross; and *Isaac*'s carrying the Wood on his Shoulders, was a Type of Christ's carrying his Cross. The lifting up the brazen Serpent in the Wilderness, was a Type of Christ's being lifted up; and the Paschal Lamb, was a plain Type of the Sacrifice of Christ. Our Saviour Christ was sacrificed upon the Cross, at the very time of the Passover, even [n] *in the very same month, on the very same day, and at the same hour, when his Type the Paschal Lamb was to be kill'd the Blessed Jesus expired.* A Bone of him was

[n] Vid. *Bishop of* Worcester's *Chronol. Append.*

not

not broken, which was typified of him in the Paschal Lamb; the breaking of his Legs, was prevented by his voluntary giving up the Ghost, when he had so much Strength and Vigour after all his Pains, as to cry out with a loud Voice; which, by the course of Nature, a Person who had endured so much before, and had hung bleeding and languishing for three Hours at least upon the Cross, 'till he expir'd by the Force and Extremity of his Torments, could not have done; and his being dead sooner than was expected, and sooner than the Malefactors were, caused the fulfilling this prophetical Type, *a Bone of him shall not be broken*, Exod. xii. 46. Numb. ix. 12. [o] He died likewise in the Year of *Jubilee*, (as Dr. *Lightfoot* computes) by which the Release and Redemption which he purchased for Mankind was typified: But according to Archbishop *Usher*, the *Jubilee* fell upon the Year of Christ's Baptism, when he began to preach the acceptable Year of the Lord, *Luke* iv. 19. and that Remission of Sins, which was prefigur'd by the Release in the Year of *Jubilee*. And as the fulfilling of these several Types concurred in our Saviour, so the fulfilling of them was brought to pass by the Malice and Cruelty of his Enemies, and of those very *Jews* who had ever understood these Types to relate to the *Messias*.

The Prophecies in like manner, were fulfilled in Him; not by any Design or Contrivance of his own, but by the mere Envy and Malice of his Murtherers. He was betrayed by one of his own Disciples, as it had been foretold of him, *Psal.* xli. 9. *John* xiii. 18. *Matt.* xxvii. 9. *Zec.* xi. 12, 13. The thirty pieces of Silver, for which he was betray'd, were by the Chief Priests given to buy the Potters Field; by which was fulfilled a noted Prophecy, that stands recorded in the Book of *Zechariah*; but because *Jere-*

[o] Lightf. *Harm. N. T.* § lix. p. 243.

miah

miah had prophesied of the same thing before him, or for some other Reason, it was better known among the *Jews* by the Name of *Jeremiah*'s Prophecy: unless, as some suppose, *Jeremy* be put for *Zachary*, by a Mistake of the Transcriber; which was obvious enough, in transcribing the Abbreviation of the Name of *Zachary*, Ιερ for Ζερ; or unless the true Reading be, *that which was spoken by the Prophet*, without the mention of any Prophet's Name, according to the *Syriac* and *Persic* Versions, and some MS. Copies still extant, and others mentioned by St. *Augustine*. The great Antiquity of the *Syriac* Version, even before the Canon of Scripture was finished, makes this Account the most probable. Our Saviour was buffeted and spit upon, according to a Prophecy of *Isaiah*, Isa. l. 6. He had Vinegar given him to drink mingled with Gall; and his Garments were parted amongst the Soldiers, by casting Lots: both which were foretold, *Psal.* xxii. 18. lxix. 21. *They pierced his Hands and his Feet*, Psal. xxii. 16. by Crucifixion, a Punishment never used among the *Jews*; which yet had been foretold should be inflicted on *Christ* so many Ages before it was known to them. This Prophecy could not have been fulfilled, unless *Christ* had been delivered up to the *Romans*, a People who had no Being in the World for divers Ages after this Prediction: And no other Nation, as [p] *Scaliger* has observed, had this kind of Punishment, by fastening Men to a Cross with Nails thrust through their Hands and Feet. And as *Judæa* had not [q] been under a Procurator before the Birth of Christ, nor till the Banishment of *Archelaus* by *Augustus*; so the Power of Life and Death, with which the Procurator of *Judæa* was entrusted, was not [r] commonly granted to Procurators. All

[p] Scaligeran. 1. [q] Joseph. de Bell. Jud. l. 2. c. 11.
[r] Tacit. Annal. 12. sub fin. & Lipsi ad loc.

which

which manifests an extraordinary Providence in the Accomplishment of this Prophecy. They that pass'd by, reviled him in the very Words of the *Psalmist*; and in his Agony he cried out in the Words of the same Psalm xx. 1, 7, 8. His Death was voluntary; for tho' it was in the power of his Enemies to crucifie him; yet his Life was in own power, which he resigned in the Words of another Psalm, *Psal.* xxxi. 5. And he caused another Prophecy to be fulfilled, by dying at that very point of time, which, if his Death had been deferred a little longer, had not been fulfilled; for the Soldiers broke the Legs of the two other that were crucified with him; but finding him dead, they broke not his Legs; though one of them suspecting that he could not be so soon dead, pierced his side, to try whether he were really dead or not, by which that Scripture was fulfilled, which saith, *they shall look on him, whom they pierced*, John xix. 34. Zech. xii. 10. Which[s] Text the Ancient *Jews* interpreted of the *Messias*. The liii Chapter of *Isaiah* is a clear Description of our Saviour's Passion, almost in every Circumstance of it. *He was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; he was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities; he was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; he was brought as a Lamb to the Slaughter, and as a Sheep before her Shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth*; his Silence being taken special notice of by *Pilate* himself, and his Meekness towards *Judas*, his most ungrateful Disciple, is wonderful beyond all Example. *He made his Grave with the Rich in his Death*; though he died in that shameful manner, under the Imputation of so much Wickedness, yet *Joseph* of *Arimathæa*, an honourable Counsellor, was suffered by *Pilate* to bury him,

[s] *See Bp.* Pearson.

which

which he did in his own new Tomb. *He was numbred with the Transgressors*; and in that sense *made his Grave* also *with the wicked*, being crucified between two Thieves; and so was not only reputed a Malefactor, and underwent the Punishment of Transgressors, but was executed at the very time and place with them, and buried when they were. *He made Intercession for the Transgressors*, for the penitent Thief in particular, whom he promised, that he should be with him that Day in Paradise, and for his Persecutors themselves, praying that they might be forgiven. The Prophecies of this Chapter are so very plainly and directly fulfilled, that I have known a Child apply them to the Passion of *Christ*.

One of the most glorious Characters, by which the *Messias* was described by the Prophets, was, that he should be their Prince and King, and this led the *Jews* into that fatal Mistake of a Temporal *Messias*: For *Messias* or Anointed signifies King, as well as Prophet or Priest, (in which three Offices Unction was used, *Exod.* xi. 15. 1 *Sam.* xv. 1. 1 *Kings* xix. 16.) And they were all united in our Saviour, who was the *Messias* anointed and inaugurated by the Descent of the Holy Ghost upon him in a visible Shape, and with a distinct and audible Voice, declaring him to be the Son of God. And that all the World might know our Saviour to be the King of the *Jews*, that Title was fix'd upon his Cross in three several Languages, the most vulgar Tongues then in the World, that no Nation might be ignorant, that *Christ* the King of the *Jews* was then crucified. For *Pilate* would not alter the Inscription; but though they had frighted him before by observing to him, that it was Treason against *Cæsar* to call any one King besides him, yet when they would now have had him change the Inscription, and have written only, *that he said, I am King*

of

of the Jews, *Pilate* gave a short and resolute Answer, *what I have written, I have written.* How much soever it were at his Peril to provoke a malicious People, in a Point, wherein they thought the Honour and Safety of their Nation so much concerned, and in a point, which could not but be exceeding tender to so jealous an Emperor as *Tiberius:* But *Pilate* had suffered himself to be carried too far already against his own Conscience, and had shewn great Aversion to their Proceedings, in the whole Managagement of his Tryal; and the same Providence, which had ordered every Circumstance to the Manifestation of the Truth, and the Conviction both of the *Jews* and *Gentiles*, now so disposed this remarkable particular, that the last period of his Life, in Opposition to all the Spight of the *Jews*, should be adorned and dignified with his true Title and Character, under which he had been foretold by the Prophets, in Capital Letters upon his Cross.

Thus were the Prophecies concerning the Birth, and Life, and Death of the *Messias*, exactly fulfilled in our Blessed Saviour, which were so many, that they could not be fulfilled by chance; and the fulfilling of them depended so much upon the Words and Actions of others, and even of his worst Enemies, that it could proceed from no Design or Contrivance of him or his Disciples: They were fulfilled in him by the Malice chiefly of his Enemies, and according to the Interpretation which they themselves were wont to give of them.

IV. His Resurrection likewise and Ascension were the fulfilling of express Prophecies, as the Apostles proved to the face of his Crucifiers, *Acts* ii. And these were such Accomplishments of Prophecies as depended upon the sole Will and Power of Almighty God, and yet as certainly came to pass, as the Birth, and Life and Death of *Christ* did: As shall be proved in due place.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIII.

Of the Prophecies and Miracles of our Blessed Saviour.

AS our Blessed Saviour was prophesied of by all the Prophets who were before him, so he was himself the Great Prophet that was to come, and was at the time of his being in the World expected of the *Jews*; and he fulfilled that Prediction by the many eminent Prophecies which he spake. He foretold the Treachery of *Judas*, and *knew from the beginning who it was that should betray him*; he foretold the manner of his own Death, that is was to be by Crucifixion, though the *Jews* often sought Opportunities to put him to Death privately, and that was a kind of punishment which the *Jews* could not inflict: but if they had killed him themselves, and had not brought him to the *Roman* Judicature, they would have done it by stoning, as they murthered St. *Stephen*. He foretold all the Circumstances of his Sufferings, that *he should be delivered unto the Chief Priests, and unto the Scribes, and that they should condemn him to death, yet that they should not take away his Life themselves, but should deliver him to the Gentiles, and that they should mock him, and should scourge him, and should spit upon him, and should kill him, and that he would rise again the third day*, Mark x. 33, 34. Of which his Enemies took such notice, that they used all their vain Endeavours to prevent it. He declared, that he would go unto the Father, *John* xiv. 18. by his Ascension, *John* vi. 62. He assured his Disciples, that his Gospel should be preached over *the whole World*, and that one particular Action, at which they were offended, of the Woman who anointed his Head, should never be omitted whereso-ever his Gospel should be preached, *Matt.* xxvi. 13. He declared

declared, that there should arise False Christs and False Prophets; but that his Religion should prevail against all the Opposition which it would meet withal, and continue to the end of the World. He foretold the Denial of St. *Peter*, and the Manner of his Martyrdom, and both were foretold to St. *Peter* himself, and his Denial, but a very little while before it came to pass, when St. *Peter* looked upon it as a thing impossible, who alone could have it in his power to hinder it. He propheſied of the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, which came to pass about forty Years after his own Death, within the Compass of that Generation, as he had foretold. [a] The very Foundations of the Temple and City were destroyed, and the Ground plowed up, so that one Stone was not left upon another of all the magnificent Buildings of the Temple, which the Disciples so much admired, when our Saviour told them, that this should be the Fate of that [b] glorious Pile, *Matth.* xxiv. 2. And as I have already observed upon another Occasion, when *Julian* with a Design [c] to defer this Prophecy, endeavouring to have it rebuilt, both the Works and the Workmen were miraculously destroyed by a Fire bursting out of the Ground. [d] *Tacitus* mentions the Prodigies foregoing the Destruction of *Jerusalem*. And the History of the *Jewish War* by *Josephus*, is the best Commentary upon the Predictions of our Saviour: There we read of all the Prodigies, and Signs and Wonders, where in

[a] Κελεύει Καισαρ ἤδη την πολιν ἀπασαν, και τον νεων καταστρεψαι — ἕως ἐξωμαλισαν οἱ καταστρεψοντες, ὡς μη οἰκηθηναι ποτε ἐν ἐτ παραχειν τοις παρελθουσι. Jos. de Bell. Jud. l. 7. c. 18.

[b] Titus *used all his Endeavours to preserve the Temple.* Jos. de Bell. Jud. l. 17. c. 26. *Destruction of it.* l. 7. c. 29.

[c] Ψοὐδεις ἀνελεγξαι τας τε Χριστε προρρησεις. Sozom. lib. 5. cap. 21.

[d] *Visæ per cœlum concurrere Acies, rutilantia Arma, & subito Nubium igne collucere Templum, expassæ repente Delubri fores,* &c. Tacit. Hist. l. 5.

Heaven or in Earth, and of all the Calamities, whether by Pestilence, or Famine, or Sword, which our Saviour had foretold. The Inhabitants fell by the Edge of the Sword, and were led away Captive into all Nations, *Luke* xxi. 24. The chiefest place of Security was the mountainous part of *Judæa*, which our Saviour foresaw, when he advised his Disciples to flee to the Mountains, *Matt.* xxiv. 16. And *Cestius Gallus* compassed *Jerusalem* with his Army, which was a warning to the Christians to depart, and then by raising the Siege unexpectedly, and against all [e] Reason, gave them an opportunity to [f] escape to *Pella*, in the Mountains of *Perea*, exactly according to *Luke* xxi. 20, 21. And what *Dion Cassius* relates in the Reigns of *Claudius*, *Nero*, *Vitellius* and *Titus*, may serve as a Comment upon our Saviour's Prophecy; for there were *famines and pestilences*, *fearful sights and great signs from heaven*, *and great earthquakes*, *the sea and the waves roaring*, xxi. 11, 25. *The Sun was darkned*, *and the Moon did not give her light*, Matt. xxiv. 29. *Mens hearts failing them for fear*, *and for looking after those things which were coming on the earth*, Luke xxi. 26. and there was so terrible an eruption of *Vesuvius*, that the Ashes were carried by the Winds into *Africk*, and into *Ægypt* and *Syria*, with so great smoak and darkness, that it was thought the World had been at an end.

Christ promised to send down the Holy Ghost upon his Disciples, with a Power of working Miracles, of Prophesying, and of speaking with New Tongues: and this was to be bestowed upon them at *Jerusalem*, from whence they were commanded by him not to depart till the Promise had been fulfilled, which was to be *not many days* after his Ascension, *Mark* xvi. 17. *Luke* xxiv. 49. *Acts* i. 4, 5. And accordingly it came

[e] Παραλογωτατα ἀπ' της πολεως ἀνεχωρησεν. Joseph. de Bell. Jud. l. 2. c. 24. [f] Euseb. Hist. l. 3. c. 5. Epiphan. de Pond. & Mens. n. 15.

to pass but ten Days after, on the Feast of *Pentecost*. [g] *Origen* acquaints us, that *Phlegon*, tho' he was not so well inform'd, as to distinguish what was foretold by St. *Peter*, from the Predictions of our Saviour himself, yet acknowledged that Christ had prophesy'd of things to come, and that his Prophecies were fulfill'd by the Event.

Our Saviour's Miracles verified the Prophecies, which had been concerning the *Messias*; for the *Jews* expected, that the *Messias* should manifest himself by Miracles to the World, as they concluded from the ancient Prophets: and therefore St. *John Baptist* did no Miracles, that he might not be mistaken for the *Messias*, of whom Miracles were a principal Token to know him by. His Miracles were wrought in the midst of his Enemies, and extorted a Confession from the Devils themselves of his Divine Power; they were of that nature, that it was impossible for those before whom they were wrought, to be imposed upon by them, and as impossible for them to be performed but by the immediate Power of God. The Miracle of the Loaves and Fishes was twice done, and the Persons who were Witnesses to it, were at one time *five thousand men, besides women and children*, Matt. xiv. 21. And the other time *four thousand men, besides women and children*, Matt. xv. 38. a Miracle wrought at two several times, and obvious to all the Senses of so many thousand Men, besides Women and Children, who being hungry, found themselves filled and satisfied with this miraculous Food in the barren Wilderness, where it was impossible for them to be supplied by natural Means, was impossible to be mistaken. The Miracles of our Saviour were so many, and so publick and undeniable, that St. *Peter* appeals to the *Jews* themselves, declaring that *Jesus of Nazareth was a man approved of God among them, by miracles, and*

[g] Contra Celsum, l. 2.

wonders, and signs, which God did by him in the midst of them, as they themselves also knew, Acts ii. 22. The Nobleman's Son was cured at a distance, and the Multitude were Witnesses to the Request he made to our Saviour, and to our Saviour's Answer upon it, and the Nobleman's Family were Witnesses that the Cure was effected at that very time. He cast Devils out of one known to have been a long time possess'd, and then suffered them to go into the Swine, to make it appear, that they were indeed evil Spirits, which had possess'd the Man, contrary to the Doctrine of the *Sadducees*, who believed no such thing as Spirits. He cured the Leprosie, and sent the cured to the Priest, as the Law required, that he by Inspection might examine, whether it were a perfect Cure or no. He gave sight to one born blind, and this was upon Examination attested to the *Pharisees* themselves. Sometimes he made the Blind to see, only by touching their Eyes; at other times, he did but command them to receive their Sight, *Luke* xviii. 43. The Cure was always performed without any Operation, or Application of Remedies; and it was instantly perfected: So that their Eyes could immediately endure the Light, which no Eye can do, that is cured otherwise than by Miracle. *Lazarus* was raised to Life again, after he had been dead four Days, before so many Witnesses, that the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* were not able to contradict the Truth of it, but were mightily enraged against him for it, and consulted to put *Lazarus* to Death, because many were induced to believe on Christ, by reason of so great and manifest a Miracle. For *Bethany* was but about two Miles distant from *Jerusalem*, and this Miracle was the Cause of his Reception there with the *Hosanna*'s and Acclamations of the People: And when the Pharisees, and the Chief Priests were informed of it: they assembled in Council, to advise what was to be done: *What do*

we? for this man doth many miracles, (Joh. xi. 18, 47. xii. 17, 18.) They acknowledg'd, that he had wrought many Miracles, and when they ascribed them to *Belzebub*, this was a Confession, that Miracles were perform'd by him, tho' they blasphemed the Power, by which they were effected. And not only the *Jews* of that Age, but their Posterity, have not deny'd, that Christ wrought Miracles, which was also confess'd by [h] *Julian* the Apostate. Some who had been cured, and others who had been raised from the dead, by our Saviour, were living for many years after, [i] as *Quadratus* testified of his own time, in his Apology to *Adrian* the Emperor.

The Circumstances of these, and the rest of our Saviour's Miracles, shewed that they were really perform'd, and they were wrought with this Intent and Design, to prove him to be the Christ. The Nature therefore and End of them shews, that nothing less than a Divine Power could have effected them: For God would never have suffer'd them to be wrought to vouch an Imposture to the World under his own Name and Authority, if they could have been performed by some other Power. [k] A learned Physician has written a Treatise to shew, that according to the Principles and Axioms of the best Physicians, all the Diseases which our Saviour cur'd, were incurable by natural Means, and it is evident to every Man, that many of them were so. He manifested his miraculous divine Power upon his Enemies, in curing the

h Ἐγγασαρῶ (ὁ Ιησους) παρ' ὃν ἐζη χρονον ὐδεν ἀκωης ἀξιον, εἰ μη τις οἰεται τὰς κυλλὰς, καὶ τυφλὰς ἰασασθ, καὶ δαιμονωντας ἐξορκιζειν ἐν Βηθσαιδα, καὶ ἐν Βηθανιᾳ, ταις κωμαις των μεγιστων ἑρων εἰναι. Julian. apud Cyril. l. 6. p. 191. Ιησους δε, ὁ τοις πνευμασιν ἐπιτατ∫ων, καὶ βαδιζων ἐπι της θαλασσης, καὶ τα δαιμονια ἐξελαυνων. Ibid. p. 213. Edit. Lipf.

i Euseb. Hist. l. iv. c. 13. Hieron Catalog.

k Guil. Ader Medici enarrationes de ægrotis & morbis in Evangelio.

Ear

Ear of *Malchus*; (*Luke* xxii. 51.) in cauſing thoſe who were ſent to apprehend him, to fall to the Ground, ſtruck down only by the Word of his Mouth; and in procuring the Diſmiſſion of his Diſciples upon demand, in order to fulfil one of his own Prophecies, (*Joh.* xviii. 6, 8.) But I ſhall inſiſt more particularly upon the Reſurrection of our Saviour, this being the moſt wonderful, and a Confirmation of all his other Miracles, and of the whole Goſpel to us.

CHAP. XIV.

Of the Reſurrection and Aſcenſion of our Bleſſed Saviour.

THE Reſurrection of our Bleſſed Saviour was propheſied of by *David*, Pſal. xvi. 8. Acts ii. 27. And it was prefigur'd by the Type of *Iſaac*'s Deliverance, when he had been offer'd up by *Abraham*, who both believ'd *that God was able to raiſe him up even from the dead, and received him alſo from thence in a figure*, Heb. xi. 19. And it was alſo prefigured by the Type of *Jonas*'s Deliverance, after he had been three Days and three Nights in the Whale's Belly, *Mat.* xii. 40. To which may be added the Teſtimony of a *Jew* in *Bereſhith Rabba*, that † *there is many a three Days ſpace in the Holy Scripture, of whom is the Reſurrection of the* Meſſias. Our Saviour roſe, as he foretold he would do, on the *third day*, including the Day of his Burial, *Matth.* xvi. 21. xvii. 23. xx. 19. Acts x. 40. He was three Days and three Nights in

† Ainſw. *on* Gen. xxii. 4.

the Grave, that is, *three* Νυχθημερα, according to the Account of the Jews, who reckon'd the Evening and the Morning, or the beginning of the Night and the beginning of the Day, as one Day, or one Revolution of the Sun; and computed from Evening to Evening, *Lev.* xxiii. 32. And in the Computation of the eight Days for the Circumcision of their Children, they computed inclusively any part of the Day in which the Child was born, for the whole: Thus the [a] *Romans* computed their *Nundinæ* and their *Calends*, &c. And the [b] *Olympiads* among the *Greeks* contain'd five Years inclusively; and thus we call that a Tertian Ague, which has but one Day's intermission.

But the Resurrection of Christ, which was the Accomplishment of these Types and Prophecies, being Matter of Fact, must be proved, as all other Matters of Fact are, by Witnesses: And the Apostles in a body offer'd themselves as Witnesses to testifie this great Article of our Faith: *This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are Witnesses*, Acts ii. 32. The thing therefore to be consider'd, is, Whether they were effectually qualify'd to be Witnesses in this Matter. And to prove that they had all the Qualifications which can be required in any Witnesses, I shall shew, 1. That they had certain Knowledge of the thing which they were Witnesses of, and could not be deceived themselves in it. 2. That they would not deceive others, having no Temptation to it, but acting against all the Interests and Advantages of this World. 3. That they alledge such Circumstances,

[a] *Annum ita diviserunt, ut nonis modò diebus urbanas res usurparent, reliquis septem ut rura colerent.* Var. de Re Rust. lib. ii. præf. Τας μελαξυ τ̃ ἀγορων ἑπλα ἡμερας. Dionys. Halicarn. Antiquit. Rom. l. 7.

[b] *Sed horum omnium πενταετηριδας maximè notandis Temporibus Græci observant*, i. e. *quaternûm annorum circuitus, quas vocant Olympiadas.* Censorin. de Die Natali, c. 18.

as

as made it impossible for them to deceive those to whom they testified the Truth of Christ's Resurrection, tho' they had never so much mind to do it. And when Men testifie things, which they have such Means and Opportunities of knowing, as make it impossible for them to be mistaken in them; when they can have no Advantage but by telling the Truth, and can expect nothing but Sufferings from it in this Life; when they produce such Circumstances, as put it out of their own power to deceive; and such as those, before whom they speak, may know to be false, if they be so; this certainly is all that can be desired in any Witness.

1. The Apostles, who were Witnesses of our Saviour's Resurrection could not be deceived themselves in it. They were ever far from being credulous, and easie of Belief, as they shew'd upon all occasions, and particularly they never could be brought to believe the Doctrine concerning the Resurrection of Christ, 'till their own Senses had convinced them: but before, they had wrong Notions and Apprehensions of it, and either misunderstood and misapplied all that had been said to them about it; or whatever they knew or believ'd concerning it before, they had no Expectations of it when he was once dead.

Our Saviour had in express Terms foretold his Resurrection upon the third Day, several times, *Matth.* xvi. 21. xvii. 23. xx. 19. But his Disciples did not rightly apprehend, or thoroughly consider what he said to them, tho' he expressed himself in the plainest Words: For they were wholly taken up with great Thoughts and Expectations of an Earthly Kingdom, and of Temporal Power and Honour; at one time *Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord, this shall not be unto thee,* Matth. xvi. 22. And at another time, just before his Passion, our Saviour had no sooner done speaking to them of his Crucifixion, and his Rising again the third Day,

but the two Sons of *Zebedee* petition'd, that *one might sit on the right-hand, and the other on the left, in his Kingdom*, and the rest of the Disciples were mov'd with Indignation against them, for preferring such a Request; and it appears from our Saviour's Discourse to them upon it, that their Minds were all bent upon the Thoughts of Temporal Glory and Dominion, *Matt.* xx. 20. After our Saviour had told them, that he must be put to death, and rise again the third day, St. *Luke* adds, *that they understood none of these things, and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken*, Luke xviii. 34. And we find the same Expression before, *Luke* ix. 40. Even after our Saviour had eaten the Passover with them, and instituted the Sacrament of his Body, which was just then to be given up and to be crucified, and of his Blood, which was to be shed for them, they were still intent upon temporal things, and had Expectations of being advanced to Places of Authority and Preeminence. *And there was a strife amongst them, which of them should be accounted the greatest*, Luke xxii. 24. At his Passion, as one of them denied him thrice, so all the rest forsook him and fled.

The Apostles and Evangelists write without any Design, or any End to serve, but that of telling the Truth; and therefore they conceal nothing of their own Failings and Faults, though they might prove never so disgraceful to them. They acquainted us that they were ambitious, and had a vain Prospect of temporal Grandeur; that they were timorous, and of little Faith, till the Descent of the Holy Ghost upon them; which appears in nothing more, than in this point of the Resurrection. They were Men of no great natural Capacity, or quick Apprehension, and they had sometimes found themselves mistaken in understanding that literally, which was spoken to them in Parables; and it is natural for Men to run from one Extreme to another, and usual for ignorant and unlearned

learned Men to imagine Difficulties where there are none. And this meeting with their Wishes and Longings after temporal Greatness, made them take all that was said to them concerning the Passion and Resurrection of Christ, in some such sense as might answer their Hopes and Desires of temporal Felicity: But when his Crucifixion had undeceiv'd them in this Conceit, they were in such Confusion and Consternation of Mind, as not to be able to recollect themselves, or to promise themselves any thing by his Resurrection, of which they had no Hopes or Expectation. The Spirits of Men are commonly as low as their Education and their Condition and Station in the World is, and are easily sunk and depress'd much lower by any great and sudden Calamity; and Men who were born in so mean a Condition, and had entertain'd a Conceit of great and vain Hopes, and then as unexpectedly fell from them, must be so dejected at it, that it is no wonder that they thought of nothing but their Sorrows, and had little Heart to imagine any possibility of Relief from the Reviving of him, whom they had seen in that infamous and cruel manner put to death. They were so possess'd with an Opinion of a temporal Kingdom, that when they had been convinc'd of the Truth of his Resurrection, and had afterwards convers'd a long time with him, they could not put it out of their Minds, *Acts* i. 6. And therefore it is no strange thing, that when they saw him dead and in the Grave, they were forsaken of all their former Hopes of the Redemption of *Israel* by him, (*Luke* xxiv. 21.) which before they had imagined to themselves, was to be perform'd by his raising himself from that Meanness to a Throne, not by his restoring himself to Life again, after he had been buried three days. The Notion which the *Jews* had of a Resurrection, was only that of the last Day, *John* xi. 24. There was indeed a Rumour rais'd by some, that *John the Baptist* was risen from the dead, and afterwards

terwards wrought those Miracles, which were done by Christ, under the Name of *Jesus of Nazareth*, as *Herod*'s guilty Fears inclined him to believe, *Luke* ix. 7. Others said, that one of the Old Prophets is risen again, ℣ 19. But both these Reports the Disciples knew to be false; and therefore had little Reason, from such groundless Mistakes, to entertain a Belief contrary to the general Opinion of the Jews, of an immediate Resurrection of any one from the Dead. They had indeed known Instances of Men rais'd by Christ from the Dead; but this was no Argument to them, that he should raise himself. *Elijah* they knew, who rais'd a Child to Life again, did not die; but *Elisha*, who had likewise rais'd a Child, when he was dead himself, never came again to Life. And whatever was said of any other Resurrection, besides that at the Day of Judgment, they looked upon it to be meant only in Allusion to that: they *questioned one with another what the rising from the dead should mean; they understood not that saying, and were afraid to ask him*, Mark ix. 10, 32.

The Apostles therefore and other Disciples were so far from being credulous, or forward to believe the Resurrection of Christ from the dead, that they were not only inquisitive and careful not to be imposed upon, but they were exceeding diffident. The Women that went to the Sepulchre, were so far from expecting to find him risen from the dead, that they carried with them a Preparation of Spices to embalm his Corps, *Mark* xvi. 1. And not finding the Body of the Lord *Jesus*, they were much *perplex'd* at it, not remembring the Words which *Jesus* had spoke to them concerning his Resurrection, till the two Men, who stood by them in shining Garments, had put them in mind of them, *Luke* xxiv. 4, 8. But when they *returned from the Sepulchre, and told all these things to the eleven, and to all the rest, their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not*, ℣ 9, 11. And

Mary

Mary Magdalen herself, though she had seen this Vision, yet went to them with this Complaint, *they have taken away the Lord out of the Sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him*, John xx. 2. Then *Peter ran unto the Sepulchre, and stooping down beheld the linen-clothes laid by themselves, and departed wondering in himself at that which was come to pass*, Luke xxiv. 12. St. *John* ran to the Sepulchre at the same time, and going into it, *saw and believed*, but he declares, that *as yet they knew not the Scripture, that he must rise again from the dead*, John xx. 8, 9. *Mary Magdalen* stands without still weeping, and complains to the two Angels, who ask'd her the Cause, *they have taken away my Lord, and I know not were they have laid him*, ℣ 13. And again to our Saviour himself, not knowing him, but supposing him to have been the Gardener, *Sir, if thou have born him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away*, ℣ 15. And after she was her self convinced of the Resurrection, when she told his Disciples, *they believed not*, Mark xvi. 11.

When our Saviour appear'd to the two Disciples, in the way to *Emmaus*, he found them reasoning and talking together of all those things which had happened, and they were sorrowful at the Thoughts of them; and when he enquir'd the Reason, they give him such an Account, as shews the doubtful and desponding Apprehensions they had of their present Condition, insomuch that he answers them, with a severe Rebuke, *O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the Prophets have spoken*, Luke xxiv. 25. And afterwards, when these two were convinced themselves, and told the rest what had happen'd, *neither believed they them*, Mark xvi. 13. And when, immediately upon this, *Jesus* stood in the midst of them, they were not only terrified and frighted, and supposed, that they had seen a Spirit; and when he spoke to them, and discoursed with them, *Why are ye troubled, and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands*

and

and my feet, that it is I my self, handle me and see, for a spirit has not flesh and bones as ye see me have, and then *shewed him his hands and his feet*; yet still after all this, *they believed not for joy, but wondred*, and were not settled in their Belief of what they had seen and heard, till he took meat and did eat it before them, *Luke* xxiv. 36. And then *he opened their understandings, that they might understand the Scriptures, and declared them the Witnesses of his Resurrection. And ye are witnesses of these things.* ℣ 48.

After all these Proofs, St. *Thomas*, one of the *Twelve*, not being with them when *Jesus* had appeared to them, the other Disciples told him, they *had seen the Lord*; but he was peremptory and resolute in it, that he would not believe him to be alive again, except he should *see in his hands the print of the nails*, and *put his finger into the print of the nails*, and *thrust his hand into his side.* After eight days, *Jesus* came to them again, and to convince St. *Thomas*, and take away all possible Pretences of Incredulity for the future, he grants him the Satisfaction he desired, and says unto him, *Reach hither thy finger and behold my hands, and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into my side, and be not faithless but believing:* And St. *Thomas*, who before was so doubtful, is now fully convinced by this infallible Evidence, and breaks out into this Confession, *My Lord and my God*, Joh. xx. 27, 28.

Thus did Christ *shew himself alive to his Apostles, after his passion, by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days*, Acts i. 3. And not of them only, but of *above five hundred Brethren at once*, 1 Cor. xv. 6. But the Apostles were his chosen *witnesses, who did eat and drink with him, after he rose from the dead*, Acts x. 41. And when he ascended into Heaven, he was taken up while they were in his Presence, and conveyed in a Cloud out of their sight; and whilst they were looking up after him stedfastly into Heaven, two Angels stood by them, and assured them, that as he ascended

cended into Heaven, ſo he ſhall in like manner come down from thence to judge the World. And he aſcended not alone, but with a great Multitude of the Saints and heavenly Hoſt, as we learn from a Paſſage in a Diſcourſe of the Apoſtle [c] St. *Thaddæus*, preſerv'd by *Euſebius*. The Aſcenſion of Chriſt into Heaven, was prefigur'd by the High-Prieſt's entring yearly into the Holy of Holies, on the Day of Atonement, *Heb.* ix. 24, 25. and was likewiſe propheſy'd of by the Pſalmiſt, who repreſents the Angels, ſome as attending him in his Aſcenſion, others as opening the Gates of Heaven; and both Companies, at his Entrance, anſwering one the other in Hymns of Praiſe, (*Pſal.* xxiv. 7.) *The chariots of God are twenty thouſand, even thouſands of Angels*, who waited on his Triumph, when he *aſcended on high, and led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men*, Pſal. lxviii. 17, 18. Eph. iv. 8. miraculous gifts to the Apoſtles and others, who were *eye-witneſſes of his Majeſty*. When his Diſciples murmured at his Doctrine of giving them his Fleſh to eat, our Saviour alledges his Aſcenſion, which was to be in their view, as that which would confirm them in the Truth of this, and all his other Doctrines: *What, and if you ſhall ſee the Son of Man aſcend where he was before?* John vi. 62. It was not needful, that Chriſt ſhould be ſeen riſing from the Grave; it was ſufficient, that he was ſo often, and ſo long ſeen after his Reſurrection. But it was neceſſary, that there ſhould be witneſſes of his Aſcenſion, becauſe then he took his final Leave of this World, as to his viſible Abode in it. It would have been ſaid, that he was again dead, unleſs he had aſcended in the view of many Witneſſes. Chriſt had foretold to his Diſciples, that in a little time he would leave them by his Death,

[c] Καθεδη μονος, ἀνεδη δε μετα πολλα ὀχλα. Euſeb. Hiſt. lib. 1. cap. ult. Macarius Hieroſolym. in Actis C. Nicæn. apud Gelaſ. Cyzicen. l. 2. c. 23. Cyrill. Hieroſolym. catech. 14.

and

and that a little after, they should see him again, before his going to the Father, *John* xvi. 16. But they were sorrowful at the News of his Departure, as well as very much dejected at his Death, and without this Prospect and Assurance of his Ascension into Heaven, his last leaving them must have been to them a second Passion, and another Death; but when they had seen him thus ascending, they were so far from mourning for him as absent, that they *worshipped him*, as ever present with them in his Divine Nature, and *returned to Jerusalem with great joy*, Luke xxiv. 52. After his Ascension, he was seen not only by St. *Stephen* to comfort and support him at his Martyrdom; but by St. *Paul*, who was thereby stop'd in the full speed of his Persecutions: his Conversion was so sudden and so powerful, that that alone might be thought sufficient; but to give him the compleat Qualifications of an Apostle, to become a Witness of Christ's being risen from the dead, and ascended into Heaven, he was pleased to appear to him from thence.

All Circumstances therefore concur to shew, that the Apostles had sufficient Opportunity fully to inform themselves in all Particulars; that they used all means to do it with their utmost Care and Diligence; that they were suspicious and distrustful; and that nothing but the clear Conviction of all their Senses, could have satisfied them. The Apostles had conversed with our Saviour for some Years, and had seen his Miracles, and had been enabled by him to do the like; and they were never credulous, but always backward and slow of Belief; and the Resurrection of Christ was a surprising thing to them: For tho' he had often plainly foretold it to them, yet they did not rightly apprehend him; and their Disappointment of their Hopes of a temporal Kingdom, and the great Terror and Consternation that his Death had put them into, had quite broke their Spirits, and thrust all Hopes or Thoughts of a Resurrection out of their Minds,

Minds, and they were very hardly brought to a Belief of it. But he overcame their Unbelief, and satisfied all their Scruples, by such ways as must be convincing, or else we can never be convinced, that there is any real Man besides our selves in the World, and that all the rest are not mere Shadows and Ghosts; they *did eat and drink with him, after he rose from the dead*; they all beheld the Marks in his Hands and in his Side; and one of them, who would not otherwise be persuaded to the Belief of his Resurrection, did thrust his Fingers, into the Print of the Nails by which he was fastened to the Cross, and his Hand into the Wound of his Side, which was made by the Soldier's Spear, just before he was taken down from it; so that they knew him as certainly to be risen again, as they had ever known him to be alive before his Death.

The Apostles were so diffident, that our Saviour *upbraided them with their unbelief, and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen*, Mark xvi. 14. But it is observable, that as St. *Thomas* was at first absent, and was suffered afterwards to be so very difficult of Belief; so it is said of the two Disciples that were walking to *Emmaus*, that *their eyes were holden, that they should not know him.* It was purposely so order'd by the Divine Providence, that they might not readily know and acknowledge him; but that the manner of his Manifestation of himself to them, might be an invincible Argument against all Opposers, that no Man might have any thing to object, when every Circumstance was as narrowly examined, and with as great Caution, and Circumspection, and Diffidence, as it could have been done by himself, if he had been there. For I think, we may challenge the boldest and subtilest Adversary, to say what he could have done more, to discover the Truth, if he had been then living, and amongst the Apostles, than was done by them. *That which*

we

we have heard, says St. *John*, *which we have seen with our eyes*, *which we have looked upon*, *and our hands have handled*, *of the word of life*, *(for the life was manifested*, *and we have seen it*, *and bear witness———) that which we have seen and heard*, *declare we unto you*, 1 Joh. i. 2, 3. Which is all that is possible for any Witness to say, as to any Matter of Fact; and they who could speak and write in this manner, must be competent Witnesses: If no other exception can lie against them, they certainly speak home to the purpose, and all that any Witness can be desired or supposed to speak.

2. As the Apostles could not be deceived themselves, so they would not deceive others, having no temptation to it, but acting against all the Interests and Advantages of this World. And those, who had denied or forsook Christ when he was living, would never have been so zealous, and resolute to suffer for him after he was crucified, if they had not been fully assured of his Resurrection. It is not to be imagin'd, they would have suffer'd all manner of Torments and Deaths, only to bear witness to a thing they had known to be false, if it had been so; and therefore it must be true, that Christ is risen from the Dead, or else we must suppose the Apostles to have been of so different a nature from all the rest of Mankind, as to delight in the things, which all others fear and abhor, even in Bonds and Imprisonments, in Infamy and Torments, and all the Punishments that can be inflicted: He that would endure all these for the sake of what he knew to be false, must surely not be of human Nature; and we may as well doubt, whether the Apostles were Men as we are, as whether Christ did rise from the Dead.

3. They alledg'd such Circumstances, as made it impossible for them to deceive those to whom they testified the Truth of Christ's Resurrection, tho' they had had never so much mind to it. They declared, that

that that *Jesus* whom the *Jews* had caused to be crucified, and had then placed a Guard of Soldiers to secure his Sepulchre, lest his Disciples should take him away, was, notwithstanding all their Care, risen from the Dead; and that that Report of the *Jews*, that the Disciples came by Night, and stole him away while the Watch slept, was utterly false; nay, that it was a suborned Story, and that the Chief Priests had given the Soldiers Money to say it. Now, if Christ had not really been risen, how easily had all this been disproved; and what a Provocation was this to the Chief Priests to disprove it, if they could? Their Honour and Reputation, and their Interest with the People, was highly concerned to vindicate the Truth of the Report, which they had hired the Soldiers to give out: And if there had been no such Report, what Reason could St. *Matthew* have to pretend there was? And if against all Reason and common Sense, he had pretended such a Report, when there had been none, it must have been the greatest disservice to his Cause that could have been thought of. But when there was such a Report amongst the *Jews*, that his Disciples had stoln him away by Night, if this could have been made good against them, would his Disciples, so soon after, in the very City where he had been crucified, declare to the face of the Chief Priests assembled in Council, *The God of our fathers hath raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree; him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, and to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins, and we are his witnesses of these things*, Acts v. 30, 31, 32. Was not this as much as could be said, to challenge them to produce those Soldiers to confront them? But besides the senseless Story, that Men should be able to know what was done, when they confess themselves to have been asleep; the Apostles could soon have confuted that Calumny, by the Miracles which they wrought by

virtue of his Resurrection: If the Soldiers had been asleep, when the Body was taken away; yet the Jews were certainly awake, when they invented and spread the Report, and when they saw the Miracles, and heard the strange Languages, by which the Apostles proved it to be false, and declared, that Christ was risen by the omnipotent Power of God.

Besides St. *Matthew* writes, that *the Graves were opened, and many bodies of saints which slept, arose and came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many*, Matth. xxvii. 52, 53. Many saw them, who are appealed to as Witnesses of the * Resurrection. And the miraculous Events at the Death of our Saviour, which were so many certain Presages and Fore-runners of his Resurrection; as the Earthquake, and the Darkness of the Sun for three Hours together in the midst of the Day, contrary to the course of Nature, the Moon being in the Full, the rending the Veil of the Temple, and the like; these were things which must be notorious, and which could not have been pretended to have happened, but the whole People of the *Jews* must be appealed to as Witnesses of them.

† *Phlegon Hadrian*'s *Libertus*, in his Chronicle, mentioned the Eclipse of the Son, and the Earthquake, in the Fourth Year of the CCII. Olympiad, in which Year Christ was crucified. And it being a Custom [d] for the Deputies and Governors of Provinces to certifie the Emperor of whatever happen'd considerable under their Government, the Resurrection of our Saviour, with the Miracles, which accompanied it, were so remarkable, and so notorious, that it had not been safe for *Pontius Pilate* to send no

* Σωμαλα τ ἁγιων τ κικοιμεμβρων ἀνεςη, και ἐνεφανισθησαν πολλοις παντως τη ἰδια μορφη τοις γνωςιμοις ἑκας ἐνεπιγνως γεγονεν. Quæst. ad Orthod. 60. inter Oper. Just. Martyr.

† Euseb. Chron. Origen. contra Cels. lib. 2.

[d] Euseb. Hist. lib. ii. c. 2.

Infor-

Information concerning him; but he found himself obliged to give an Account both of his Miracles, and his Death and Resurrection, to the Emperor *Tiberius* who thereupon proposed it to the Senate, to have him taken into the Number of their Gods, and made it punishable to accuse any Man for being a Christian, during his Reign. And this Information of *Pontius Pilate* was entred upon Record at *Rome*. To which *Justin Martyr* [e] appeals, in his Apology to the Emperor *Antoninus Pius*, and the Senate; and *Tertullian* in his *Apology*, which was likewise presented to the Senate of *Rome*, or at least to the Governors of the Provinces. They both lived in the next Age, and were both educated in a different Religion, and upon these and such-like Proofs became Christians; and they were Men of excellent Learning and Judgment: but no Man who could write an Apology, can be supposed to have so much Confidence, and so little Understanding, as to appeal to that Account which *Pilate* sent to *Tiberius*, concerning the Resurrection of Christ, in Apologies dedicated and presented to the *Roman* Emperor himself, and to the Senate, or the chief Magistrates of the Empire, if no such Account had ever been sent, or none had been then extant to be produced. But, by the special Providence of God, both the Birth and the Resurrection of our Saviour were inserted into the publick Records of *Rome*, and were to be seen there for a long time after; and the Heathen, in whose Custody they were, are desired

[e] Καὶ ταῦτα ὅτι γέγονε, δυνασθε μαθειν ἐκ των ἐπι Ποντιε Πιλατε γενομένων Ἀκτων. Just. Mart. Apol. ad Antonin. Pium. *Tiberius ergò, cujus tempore nomen Christianum in seculum intravit; annunciata sibi ex Syriâ Palæstinâ, quæ illic veritatem illius Divinitatis revelarent, detulit ad Senatum, cum Prærogativa suffragii sui. Senatus, quia non ipse probaverat, respuit: Cæsar in sententiâ mansit, comminatus periculum accusatoribus Christianorum.* Tertull. Apol. c. 15. *Ea omnia super Christo Pilatus, & ipse jam pro suâ conscientiâ Christianus, Cæsari tunc Tiberio nunciavit.* Id. ib. c. 21.

by the Primitive Christians to consult them: for they were content to put the matter upon this issue, that if they were resolved not to believe what the Christians said, yet they would at least credit their own Records: Since the Chief Priests and Pharisees had represented to *Pilate* the Apprehensions which they were under, because Christ had declared, he would rise again the third Day, that his Disciples would come by Night and take away his Corps, and endeavour to persuade the People that he was risen from the Dead: Whereupon, by *Pilate*'s Order, they had secured the Sepulchre from any such Attempt, fastening the Stone, which was fix'd at the entrance into it, putting a Seal, to discover if the Stone should be removed, and placing a Guard of Soldiers to prevent its removal; since his Resurrection was notwithstanding so notorious, that the Soldiers were bribed to take the Blame to themselves, and confess, that they were asleep when his Disciples came and stole him away; since the Chief Priests undertook to excuse the Soldiers for this Remissness or Neglect of their Duty, which was in so high a degree criminal, and of that nature, that the Chief Priests would have been the first to resent it, if the Soldiers had been really guilty; since the pretended Crime of our Saviour was Treason; and by the Confession of the Chief Priests, if he should be believed to be risen, it had been better if he had never been put to death: In this case, which so much concerned the *Roman* Government, it cannot be supposed but *Pilate* must make strict Enquiry into the true State of it, in order to send a full Information to *Tiberius*.

Upon these Proofs and Reasons, by the clear Evidence and Power of Truth, *the word of God mightily grew and prevailed*, against all that Prejudice and Malice and every Vice could do to oppose it, in *Rome* and in *Jerusalem* it self: For in this very City, where our Saviour had been crucified, and where it had been

been impossible to have made Proselytes, if his Resurrection had not been evidently proved beyond all possibility of a confutation, great Numbers were daily added to the Church. A Church was forthwith founded at *Jerusalem*, and a Bishop appointed by the Apostles; and both the Body of the People, and their [f] Bishops, being Fifteen in number, to the final Destruction of *Jerusalem* by *Adrian*, were *Jews* by Nation.

We see then, as the Testimony of the Apostles is in it self beyond all exception, so it is of such a nature, as to make it impossible for them to deceive, if they had intended it: But indeed, no Man could have proceeded in that manner, or would have endeavoured it, who had had any intentions to deceive; and the Event shew'd, that it was the direct and plain Evidence, and Force of Truth, which supported it self, notwithstanding all the Prejudices and Advantages which its worst Adversaries had against it.

CHAP. XV.

Of the Apostles and Evangelists.

THE principal Articles of the Christian Faith being Matters of Fact, as the Passion, Resurrection, and Ascension of Christ, upon which the rest depend; the great thing to be enquired into, is, whether the Apostles had all the Qualifications requisite to become Witnesses of Matters of Fact. This has been already shewn as to the Resurrection; and if in general we examine whether we may safely rely upon that Credibility wherewith they preach'd the Go-

[f] Euseb. Hist. l. 1. c. 5.

spel to the World, the Enquiry will fall under these Heads; I. Whether they were Men of sufficient Abilities to discern and understand what they testify'd. II. Whether they had sufficient Means and Opportunities to know it. III. Whether they were Men of Integrity, that without Artifice or Design, truly declared what they knew.

I. That the Apostles were Men of sufficient Understanding, to become Witnesses of a Matter of Fact, was never doubted by any one, nor can it be questioned by such as peruse their Writings: And indeed Who is there of any common Sense, that is not a competent Witness of what he sees, and hears, and has the Experience of, for so long time together? For,

II. By their Conversation with our Saviour, both before his Passion, and after his Resurrection, the Apostles had such Opportunities of knowing what they attested, that it was impossible for them to be deceived in any part of it, It was a necessary Qualification of all the twelve Apostles, that they should have convers'd with our Saviour before his Death, and have seen him after his Resurrection. For when one was to be ordained in the room of *Judas*, to be a Witness with the rest of Christ's Resurrection, he was to be one that had *companied with them all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among them, beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day* that he *was taken up from them*, Acts i. 21, 22. They saw his Miracles, and heard his Doctrine, and knew his manner of Life, and had all the Opportunities, and used all the Means to inform themselves, that it was possible for Men to do: They were *eye-witnesses of his majesty*, 2. Pet. i. 16. They had *heard, and seen with their eyes, and had looked upon*, or beheld and discerned for a long time together, *and their hands had handled* that which was the Subject of their Testimony, 1 *John* i. 1, 2, 3. They had made all the Search into it, and had used all the Exactness that could

could be; and were as diſtruſtful and as hard of Belief, as any Men could have been, who are moſt ſuſpicious and jealous of being impoſed upon. And of theſe Apoſtles, two wrote the Life of our Saviour; and all bore witneſs to the Truth of what theſe wrote, and preached the ſame things, where ever they came: Of the two other Evangeliſts, St. *Mark* had his Information from St. *Peter*, whoſe Diſciple and Companion he was; and St. *Luke* wrote his Goſpel from the Account he had of thoſe who were *eye-witneſſes and miniſters of the word*, Luke i. 2. And he was the Companion and Diſciple of St. *Paul*, who was ſuch an Enemy to Chriſtianity before his Converſion, that nothing leſs than a miraculous Power could have made that ſudden Change in him; he probably muſt have ſeen our Saviour before his Paſſion, and then ſaw him again at his Converſion, and heard him ſpeaking to him from Heaven, *Am not I an Apoſtle?* ſays he, in vindication of his own Authority; *have I not ſeen the Lord Chriſt?* 1 Cor. ix. 1. So that St. *Paul*, as well as the other twelve Apoſtles, had ſeen and heard our Saviour; and they were all convinced by their own Senſes, of what they deliver'd to others; and beſides theſe, he was ſeen after his Reſurrection by many others, both Men and Women, and at one time was ſeen by above five hundred together, 1 *Cor.* xv. 6. Of all the Writers of the Books of the New Teſtament, there are but two who were not Eye-witneſſes to what they relate, and theſe two had their Relations from the Apoſtles and others who were Eye-witneſſes.

III. The Apoſtles were Men of Integrity, and without any Artifice or Deſign truly declared what they knew. 1. They had no wordly Intereſt to advance by their Teſtimony, but ſuffer'd by it, and had a certain Proſpect of Suffering. 2. There are peculiar Marks of Sincerity in all their Writings.

1. They had no worldly Interest to serve by their Testimony, but suffer'd by it, and had a certain prospect of Sufferings. They could propose no Advantage to themselves, of Gain, or Honours, or Pleasures; but on the contrary, underwent a voluntary Poverty, and Infamy, and Torments; which was all that they met with in this World for their Pains, and all that they could expect to meet with. They forsook all which they had; St. *Matthew*, a gainful Employment; and St. *Paul*, who wrote the most of any of the Pen-men of the New Testament, lost the Favour of the Chief-Priests, and the Preferments which a Person of his Learning and Zeal might promise himself from them: St. *Luke*, a Physician by his Profession, left an Employment both of Honour and Advantage; and the rest lost all they had; and can any Man lose more? All of them left an honest and secure Lifelihood, and exposed themselves to the Hatred and Contempt of all their nearest Friends and Relations, whose Love and Esteem, both by Nature and Education, they must be inclined most to desire; and they became obnoxious to all the Affronts, and Outrages, and Torments, which a furious Zeal could inflict upon them. All which was no new or unexpected thing to them; they saw what their Master had suffer'd, and could hope to fare no better than he had done. They were often forewarned by Christ long before-hand, what must befal them; they were told, that they must take up their Cross, and follow him, and could be his Disciples upon no easier terms. He had set forth the Reception which they must expect to meet with in the World, just in the same manner as they found it, under the most frightful Appearance that Words could represent. And this they soon found as punctually true, as all the rest that he had foretold to them: But though they found it so, and sometimes were dismiss'd with a severe Charge to desist from preaching the Gospel, and

and at other times escaped, and had an Opportunity given them to avoid any farther Danger by preaching it; they ever persevered in it with the greatest Zeal and Constancy, despising all Dangers, and all sorts of Torments and Deaths, and glorying still and rejoicing that they suffer'd in so good a Cause; and at last they seal'd their Doctrine with their Blood.

St. *Paul* was in great Reputation with the Chief Priests, and Scribes and Pharisees, before his Conversion, and was employ'd by them in persecuting the Church; and as often as he appear'd before them, they had nothing to accuse him of, but his Profession of a Religion, which obliges all Men to the strictest Justice and Holiness. If the Apostles had not been the best, they must have been the worst of Men, for imposing upon the World, under the pretence of a Divine Mission and Authority; and yet this they must do with no other design but to promote Virtue and Holiness; which no ill Man could design, to his own certain Loss and Destruction in this World and the next: and the less Men believe of the next World, the more fond they are to make sure of this.

Ambition, and a desire of Fame, and a Name after Death, rarely happens to Men of obscure Birth and mean Education; and it was naturally impossible, that it should now befall so many of them, without any ground or reason to expect it, when in all humane Consideration, they had a certain Prospect of nothing but Infamy after Death, as well as of Disgrace, and Want, and Torment, during their Lives. And no Man could resolve upon attesting any thing on such terms, unless he had been absolutely certain of the Truth of it, much less could so many set upon such a Design together: For as they could have no Arguments to persuade one another to enter upon such an Attempt; so if they had once conspir'd in it, they would

would soon have deserted and discovered each other, when they lay under all the Disadvantages and Difficulties imaginable, and had nothing to support and unite them, but the Truth and Reality of what they deliver'd. And it is farther observable, that in the first Ages of the Church, and the nearer Christians were to the Apostles, the more zealous they were to live according to the Gospel of Christ, and to die in Defence of it: foy they had then greater Opportunities of informing themselves of the Imposture, if there had been any, that had therefore the greater Means of being certified that there was none. And Men of great Parts and Accomplishments, such as *Sergius Paulus*, Governor of *Cyprus*, *Dionysius* the *Areopagite*, *Justin Martyr*, *Tertullian*, and others, who were inquisitive Men, and able to make a true Judgment of things, upon a full Examination of all Particulars, became early Converts to the Christian Religion.

2. There are peculiar Marks of Sincerity in all the Writings of the Apostles and Evangelists. They were not ambitious of being known to the World by their Writings, but wrote only as they were [a] by necessity drawn to it, for the farther Propagation of the Gospel. And upon all occasions they declare their own Frailties and Faults, and many times such as could never have been known but from themselves. St. *Matthew* had spent the former part of his Life in no very creditable Employment, but among Publicans and Sinners, as he says himself: for he leaves recorded to all Posterity, the Censure of his own Life, saying, that he *sat at the receipt of custom*, Matt. ix. 9, 10. and styling himself *Matthew the Publican*, Matt. x. 3. *Eusebius* observes, that none of the other Evangelists, have mention'd a thing so reproachful of him, as his having been a Publican, but St. *Matthew* only has

[a] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. lib. iii. c. 23.

written

written it of himself: For it was the Opinion not only of *Eusebius*, [b] but of *Origen*, and of *Heracleon*, that St. *Matthew* and *Levi*, mention'd *Mark* ii. 14. *Luke* v. 27. were two different Persons; and *Grotius* is of the same Opinion. Or if *Matthew* and *Levi* were the same Person, St. *Mark* writes, that *Jesus sat at Meat in Levi's house*; and St. *Luke*, that *Levi made him a great feast in his own house*; but St. *Matthew* says only, *as Jesus sat at meat in the house*; not mentioning in whose house, though he omits nothing that the others set down, but the mention of his own Hospitality. St. *Jerom* [c] says, that the other Evangelists, out of respect to St. *Matthew*, call'd him by that Name, which was less known than *Matthew*; being of Opinion, that St. *Matthew* had also the Name of *Levi*. [d] *Eusebius* also takes notice, that St. *Matthew* places himself after St. *Thomas*, in the Catalogue of the Apostles, whereas the other Evangelists place him first.

St. *Peter* gives an ample Testimony to St. *Paul*'s Epistles, 2 *Pet.* iii. 16. notwithstanding what is written of himself in that to the *Galatians*. In St. *Mark*'s Gospel, [e] which was written from the Account, that that Evangelist had from St. *Peter*, when St. *Peter* answer'd our Saviour, that he was the Christ, no farther is said of our Saviour's Reply, but that he *charged them that they should tell no man of him*, Mark viii. 30. St. *Peter* omitting that honourable Character given him by our Saviour, and the Power of the Keys bestow'd upon that occasion, which is at large related by St. *Matthew*, Matt. xvi. 16. But immediately after, St. *Peter*'s Behaviour towards our Saviour is fully related; which was so unseemly, as that they began even to rebuke Christ for speaking of his Sufferings, and

[b] Euseb. Demonstr. lib. iii. c. 5. Orig. contra Cels. lib. i. Heracl. apud Clem. Alex. strom. lib 4. Grot. ad Matt. ix. 9.

[c] Hieron. ad Matt. ix. 9. [d] Euseb. Dem. Evang. ib.

[e] Tertul. adv. Marc. l. 4. c. 5. Iren. l. 3. c. 1. Origen. apud Euseb. l. 6. c. 25.

extorted

extorted that severe Rebuke from Meekness it self, *Get thee behind me, Satan.* This St. *Peter* has left written of himself by St. *Mark*, who wrote by the Approbation and Direction of St. *Peter*; but the honourable part is past over in Silence, though belonging to the same time and place. So again, the Denial of St. *Peter* is related in all its Circumstances of Aggravation, by St. *Mark*, as well as by St. *Matthew*, *Matt.* xxvi. *Mark* xiv. He acquaints us, that without any Torments or Menaces, or the least Compulsion, at the bare question of a poor Maid, he denied his Master, and that he deny'd him thrice, and the last time even with Oaths and Imprecations, which are not mention'd by St. *Luke* and St. *John*, Luk. xxii. Joh. xviii. A Man, that delivers these things of himself, plainly shews, that he is so far from all Vanity and seeking his own Praise, that he can be supposed to have no other aim or design, but to declare the Truth to the Glory of God and the Benefit of Mankind, though it prove to be never so much to his own Disgrace. And they relate, that as soon as our Saviour was apprehended, all his Disciples forsook him and fled, when they might have been able to have witnessed in his behalf, and to have confronted *Judas*, who, they might well believe, would have turn'd his Accuser, after he had betray'd him. But St. *Peter* soon repented, and both he and St. *John* took courage, and returned to see what became of their Master, and both St. *Peter*'s denial, and their leaving their Master thus in his Distress, might never have been known, unless they had discovered it themselves. St. *John* never mentions himself, nor his Brother St. *James* by Name throughout his whole Gospel, but omits their early coming to Christ, when he had as yet but two Disciples; and their self-denial in leaving their Father and all that they had; tho' he relates what St. *Matthew* and St. *Mark* write concerning St. *Andrew*'s and St. *Peter*'s coming to Christ but just before; and then speaks of

of *Philip* and *Nathanael*, purposely declining to say any thing of himself on so memorable an Occasion, *Matt.* iii. 21. *Mark* i. 19. *Joh.* i. 40.

The Reproofs, and sometimes very severe Reprehensions, which were given them by Christ, could never have come to our Knowledge, but by their own Information: As that they were blamed for having little Faith, *Matt.* xvi. 8. no Faith, *Mark* ix. 19. That our Saviour upbraided them with Unbelief and Hardness of Heart, *Mark* vi. 52. viii. 17. xvi. 14. For being foolish and slow of Heart, to believe all that the Prophets have spoken, *Luke* xxiv. 25. They declare, that they were ambitious and emulous, and fond of Temporal Honours; that they had very wrong Notions of Christ and his Kingdom, and they set forth at large how timorous and how difficult they were of Belief, and how very scrupulous and diffident of Christ's Resurrection.

St. *Paul*, the great Apostle of the Gentiles, as St. *Peter* was the Apostle of the Circumcision, by his Disciple and Companion St. *Luke*, has likewise left an Account of himself, which none but a sincere honest Man, regardless of his own Praise, would ever have suffer'd to be given of him. St. *Luke* says, that the Witnesses against St. *Stephen laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose Name was Saul*, Acts vii. 58. And that he was *consenting to St. Stephen's death*, which he repeats twice, and once from St. *Paul*'s own Mouth, in his Speech to the *Jews*, Acts viii. 1. xxii. 20. He says, that St. *Paul made havock of the Church*, Acts viii. 3. And *breathing out threatnings and slaughter against the Disciples of the Lord, went unto the high-priest, and desired of him letters to Damascus*, Acts ix. 1. These are not the Words of one, that had a design to dissemble or extenuate in favour of any one. And out of a deep sense of his offence, though it were committed ignorantly in unbelief, St. *Paul* declares himself to be *the least of the Apostles*, and *not meet to be called*

led an Apostle, because he had persecuted the Church of God, 1 Cor. xv. 9. And at another time styles himself *less than the least of all saints*, Eph. iii. 8. *and chief of sinners*, 1 Tim. i. 15. ascribing all to the Power and Grace of God. St. *Luke* relates, that there was *a sharp contention* between St. *Paul* and St. *Barnabas*, Acts xv. 39. And St *Paul* tells the *Galatians*, that he had withstood St. *Peter*. to the face, *Gal.* ii. 11, 14. So plain it is, that they did not act by any Confederacy between themselves, and that the Truth was dearer to them than any thing besides. In the mean time the Apostles have left behind them little or no Account of their Journings, and Labours, and Sufferings, only St. *Paul* mentions some things of himself upon a necessary Occasion; the rest we have from St. *Luke*, and he speaks chiefly of St. *Paul*, and of him only till his first coming to *Rome*, and of St. *Peter* very little in comparison; of the rest of the Apostles, scarce any thing in particular: so little Design had they of propagating themselves a Name to Posterity.

St. *Paul* used all lawful Compliances, and he, who when the Honour of Religion was concerned, made so stout Opposition to St. *Peter* himself, at other times, when he might safely do it, *became all things to all men.* And he joins others together with himself in the beginning of many of his Epistles, (1 *Cor.* i. 1. 2 *Cor.* i. 1. *Gal.* i. 1. *Colos.* i. 1. 1 *Thess.* i. 1. 2 *Thess.* i. 1. *Philemon* i.) Which was a great Condescension, and a kind of communicating his Authority to them, whom he took, as it were, into Commission with himself. But when through the Malice and Insinuations of false Apostles, he was forced to speak in his own Defence, he does it with great Unwillingness, and calls it Folly, and *confidence of boasting*, 2 Cor. xi, 1, 17. And if *he must needs glory*, he *will glory in the things which concern his Infirmities*, ℣ 30. He recounts his Sufferings only, and omits the Success, in the many Conversions and numerous Victories obtained by them:

He

He mentions here nothing of his preaching, nothing in particular of his Miracles; but insists upon that, which was the least he could say of himself, when something must be said, that he had suffered much for the Gospel of Christ, whatever the Effect had been. He had concealed his being *caught up to the third Heaven*, ([f] as St. *Ambrose* observes) for fourteen Years, and had not at last discovered it, but for the Benefit of others; and even then he confessed, that he knew not whether he was *out of the Body or in the Body:* so far he was from glorying in his Knowledge, that he owned his Ignorance, and speaks of himself in the third Person, with great Humility and Unwillingness, intimating only that he meant himself. His manner of Expression shews, that nothing less than the Occasion upon which he mentions it, could have forc'd from him such a Discovery. And at the same time, he confesses *there was given to him a thorn in the flesh, the Messenger of Satan to buffet him, lest he should be exalted above measure*, and declares himself to be *nothing*, 2 Cor. xii. 5, 7, 11. He gives all the Glory to God, magnifying his Office, and the Grace which enabled him in the Administration of it: And as upon all other occasions he speaks of himself with the greatest Abasement, so when the importunate Malice of his Enemies constrained him to it, and the Glory of God and the Salvation of Men required him to speak something less submissively of himself, he discovers his great Humility in that he used so much Caution, and put in so many lessening and abating Clauses, that the Glory might redound to God and not to himself: insomuch that it appears to have been one of the greatest Instances of the Humiliation and Self-denial of so truly humble and holy a Man, to be forced to speak things which may seem boasting, and make him incur the Censure of Pride and Folly. But he was wil-

[f] Ambr. in Ps. 36.

ling

ling to be counted vain and proud for the sake of the Gospel; and had so far mortified all Pride and vain Glory, as to be contented upon so just an account, to incur the disgrace of being supposed guilty of it. For there can be no higher Instance of a truly humble and pious Mind, than to forego the esteem and reputation of being thought so, when the Glory of God and Charity to the Souls of Men require it; he is not throughly humble, who in such a case would not be thought proud, but his very Humility is matter of Pride to him; and it is the last degree of Vanity, which an humble Man can part with, to be desirous not to be esteemed proud. The Truth is, if it were not for the Pride of Men, there would be no need of greater caution and reservedness, when we speak of our selves, than when we speak of others, but Men would speak the truth of themselves and others with the same freedom and plainness. So that this was an infallible argument of the integrity and sincerity of the Apostles, that they spoke always what was proper and seasonable to be spoken; the praise or dispraise of themselves, or others, was not their business, but the Glory of God and the Good of Men.

They write no Encomiums upon one another, nor upon their Master himself; and they write no Invectives upon their worst Enemies, *Judas* and *Herod*, and *Pontius Pilate*, but set down plain Truth and Matter of Fact, whoever is concerned, with the same Simplicity, with which they tell their own Faults.

What Qualifications then can be desired in any Witness, which do not all concur in the Apostles and Evangelists? The Apostles shew by their Writings, that they were Men of Understanding sufficient to apprehend the things they attest and write about; and indeed, what Man of any Understanding is not capable of witnessing that to be true, which he sees and hears, and perceives with every sense? They had all the advantages and opportunities that ever any Witnesses

witnesses could have, to know what they said to be true; and they were plain Men without Art or Disguise, bred up most of them to mean and laborious Callings; and they had no expectations of any thing but Sufferings in this Life, and therefore were as far from any Temptation as from any possibility of imposing upon the World, and they set down their own faults upon all occasions, as particularly as they do whatever else they relate, having no regard to any thing but Truth.

CHAP. XVI.

Of the Prophecies and Miracles of the Apostles, &c.

THere had been a long cessation or intermission both of Prophecies and Miracles in the *Jewish* Church till the coming of Christ, but by the Descent of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles, the Prophecy of *Joel* was fulfilled, and the Spirit of God was poured out in greater abundance, than ever it had been before, in bestowing the gifts of Miracles and of Prophecy in a more eminent manner, and to greater numbers of Men, and those of all Nations, than had ever been done at any time before: for these were *the latter days*, the last distinction of Time, or the last period of the World, in which God had purposed to reveal himself; and this being the last, was in all respects the fullest and most perfect Revelation.

I. A Spirit of Prophecy was bestowed upon the Apostles and others. A Famine [a] taken notice of by Heathen Authors, which happened throughout all the World in the days of *Claudius Cæsar*, was pro-

[a] Sueton. & Dion. Cass. in Claudio.

phesied of by *Agabus*, Acts xi. 28. And the same Prophet, both by Actions, and in express Words, signified, that St. *Paul* should be bound at *Jerusalem*, and delivered to the Gentiles, *Acts* xxi. 11. which was likewise foretold by others, even in every City where that Apostle came, *Acts* xx. 23. St. *Paul* himself foretold his own Afflictions, 1 *Thess.* iii. 4. He foretold to the Elders of the Church of *Ephesus*, that Men would soon arise even from among themselves, who would divide and disturb the Church, *Acts* xx. 29, 30. And he foretold the same, 1 *Tim.* iv. 3. 2 *Tim.* iii. 1. In the midst of a Tempest, and in imminent Danger of Death, he foretold, that tho' the Ship would be lost, yet all the Persons in it, who were two hundred three score and sixteen, should escape, but that they *must be cast upon a certain Island.* He had before, from the tempestuous Weather, and the Season of the Year, (the *Fast of Atonement* being already past) express'd his Apprehensions, that *this Voyage would be with hurt and much damage, not only of the Lading and Ship, but also of their Lives*; but when the Danger was most threatning, it was reveal'd to him, that *not an hair should fall from the head of any one of them*, Acts xxvii. 9, 10, 23, 34. St. *Peter* declared, that *in the last days there would come scoffers, walking after their own lusts*, 2 Pet. iii. 3. Which Prophecy St. *Jude* saw fulfilled in his time, *Jude* 18. and Gods knows, we see it fulfill'd in ours. For the Scoffers at Religion would do well to consider, that all their Mockery and Affronts are so far from doing any Prejudice to Religion, that they by that very means fulfil a Prophecy, and add a Confirmation to it, when they think themselves most successful against it. St. *Paul* forewarns the *Thessalonians* of the lying Wonders, and strong Delusions, and notorious Wickedness, which would break in upon the Church at the coming of Antichrist, 2 *Thess.* ii. 3. And that this accordingly came to pass, St. *John* wit-

neſſeth, ſaying, that even then there were many Antichriſts. 1 *John* ii. 18. iv. 3. 2 *John* vii. And tho' it be variouſly diſputed, who is the Antichriſt, 1 *John* ii. 22. 2 *John* vii. ſuppoſed to be the Beaſt, *Rev.* xiii. Yet that the Prophecies concerning the Deluſions, and the Impieties and Cruelties of Antichriſt, expreſs'd in the Texts now mentioned, and more fully deſcribed in the Revelation of St. *John*, have been in great meaſure already accompliſh'd, will admit of no Diſpute; and the gradual and repeated Accompliſhment of them in divers Ages, and in ſo many Inſtances, is that which has cauſed ſo much variety of Opinion in this matter; learned Men eaſily miſtaking ſome of theſe many Antichriſts for the Beaſt, or the great Antichriſt. In the Revelation of St. *John*, we have the State of the Church, and the Events which were to befal it, deſcribed; and many things contained in it we know to be come to paſs, as what concerns the Seven Churches of *Aſia*, &c. and the Obſcurity of other places is elſewhere to be accounted for. [b] *Quadratus* had this Gift of Prophecy, and it continued in the Church to the time of *Juſtin Martyr*, of *Irenæus*, of [c] *Origen*, and [d] *Dionyſius Alexandrinus*, and of St. *Cyprian*.

II. The Miracles wrought by the Apoſtles, were according to an expreſs Promiſe of Chriſt to them, That after his Aſcenſion, they ſhould do even greater Works that he had done himſelf, *John* xiv. 12. That is, they ſhould do Works that would be more eminent and obſervable in the Eyes of the World, though not more excellent and divine; for nothing could be greater in that ſenſe, than to raiſe a Man from the Dead. Which Promiſe was fulfilled to them at the Feaſt of *Pentecoſt*, when Men from all Parts of the

[b] Euſeb. Eccl. Hiſt. lib. 3. c. 36. lib. 4. c. 18. lib. v. c. 7. Iren. lib. ii. c. 57. lib. v. c. 6. Cypr. Epiſt. 57. 66.

[c] Orig. contra Celſ. l. 1. [d] Euſeb. Hiſt. l. vi. c. 40.

World were made Witnesses to it. For they were commanded by our Saviour, not to depart from *Jerusalem, but to wait for this promise*; and he assured them, that they should be *baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days* after his being taken up from them into Heaven; and that they should *receive power, after that the Holy Ghost was come upon them, and should be witnesses unto him, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth*, Acts i. 4, 5, 8. And this miraculous Power was visibly bestowed, not only upon the Apostles themselves, but upon the [c] hundred and twenty, mention'd *Acts* i. 15.

I have already shewn, that the Apostles were effectually qualified to be Witnesses of what they delivered concerning Christ, and that they could neither be deceived themselves in it, nor propose any Advantage to themselves by deceiving others; and that if they had designed any Deceit, they alledged such Circumstances as made it impossible for them to have pass'd undiscover'd. All which will be exceedingly confirmed, by considering the miraculous Gifts which the Apostles received by the Descent of the Holy Ghost, according to this Promise of our Saviour. I shall therefore shew, how the Apostles were enabled, by the Descent of the Holy Ghost upon them, to become Witnesses to Christ. 1. By the Miracles which they wrought themselves. 2. By that Power which was convey'd by them to others, of working Miracles. 3. By their supernatural Resolution, Courage, and Patience under their Sufferings.

1. The Apostles were enabled to become Witnesses to Christ, by the Miracles which they wrought themselves. This Power of Miracles qualified them most

[c] *Monstrabatur locus, ubi super centum viginti credentium animas Spiritus Sanctus descendisset.* Hieron. Epitaph. Paulæ. *Vid. Dr.* Lightf. *Exercit. on* Acts ii. 1. p. 643. Aug. in Epist. Joan. Tract. 2. Chrysost. Hom. in Act. ii.

effectually to be Witnesses of the Resurrection, and Ascension, and other Articles of our Faith: For they could neither deceive nor be deceived in these miraculous Gifts, which were bestowed upon them, to be an Assurance to themselves, and an Evidence to others, that it was the Cause of God in which they were engaged, and his Truth which they delivered.

They could not be deceived themselves, undoubtedly, in a thing of this nature; they could not be ignorant, whether they were real Miracles which they wrought, or not; they must needs know whether their own Pretences were true or false; and whether they could speak the Languages, and do the Wonders, which the World believed them to do and speak; and they could not but know by what Power and Means they were enabled to perform all their miraculous Works.

And these Works were of that nature, and done in that manner, that they could impose upon no Man by them; they could not make Men believe that they spoke all kinds of Languages, if they did not speak them, nor that they cured all sorts of Diseases, if they had not cured them: Nothing is more easie than for a Man to know a Language that he understands, when he hears it, or than for Men that were sick, to know that they are recovered, when they feel themselves well. And the manner of their performing these Miracles, was the most publick and notorious, in respect of the Time, and Place, and the Persons on whom they were wrought. The general Expectation, that *the kingdom of Heaven was immediately to appear*, Luke xix. 11. made the resort to the great Festivals of the *Passover* and *Pentecost* to be exceeding great.

Our Saviour had been crucified at the Feast of the *Passover*, in the sight of the *Jews* and Proselytes, who were met together from all Parts of the World at that Solemnity: And but fifty days after, at the next so-

lemn Festival of the Jews, in the very same City where he had been crucified, in the presence of Multitudes of People of all Nations and Languages, which came to keep the Feast of *Pentecost*, the Apostles declared to them in all their several Tongues, that this same *Jesus* was by the Almighty Power of God rais'd from the Dead, and that they were impower'd by Him to speak all those Languages. The Apostles were at the same time taken notice of to be *Gallilæans*, Men of low Birth, and of no Education. St. *John*, in particular, was known to the High Priest himself, and the rest were all known to many that heard them; their Parentage, and Place of Abode, and manner of Life, might easily be enquired into; for they were no Strangers, nor in a far Country: From all these things it appeared, that it was impossible that they should be capable of speaking any of those Languages, but by Inspiration; and to speak all Languages, is a thing which no Man ever could hope to arrive at by Study or Conversation, though he should make it the whole Business of his Life. And therefore this could least of all be suspected of Men of mean Employments, and who got their Livelihood by their daily Labour and Industry.

The Miracles which the Apostles wrought, were likewise in the most publick Places of the City, and in the most publick manner, upon Persons who had been most remarkable, and generally taken notice of for their Infirmities. St. *Peter*, by pronouncing only these Words, *In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk*, cured a Man of about forty Years of Age, who was known to have been lame from his Birth, and was carried and laid daily at one of the Gates of the Temple, where there was wont to be the greatest Resort of People, to ask an Alms of them that entered into the Temple: And this Man being immediately cured, went with St. *Peter* and St. *John* into the Temple, *and all the people saw him walking and praising*

praising God, and they knew that it was he which sat for alms at the beautiful gate of the Temple, Acts iii. 9, 10. And the Rulers of the Jews enquired into the matter; and upon Examination, *when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled, and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus; and beholding the man which was healed standing by them, they could say nothing against it*, but confess'd among themselves, *that indeed a notable Miracle hath been done by them, is manifest to all them that dwell in Jerasalem, and we cannot deny it*, Acts iv. 13, 14, 16.

By this and other evident and publick Miracles, the miraculous Power of the Apostles became so much admired and magnify'd by the People, *that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might over-shadow some of them: There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits, and they were healed every one*, Acts v. 15, 16. And in this manner the Apostles continued several Years in *Jerusalem*, doing Miracles upon all Occasions, and before all People. And the same miraculous Power manifested it self at *Ephesus*, where *God wrought special Miracles by the hands of Paul, so that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them*, Acts xix. 11, 12. So impossible was it for the Apostles to deceive those, before whom their Miracles were so frequently and publickly wrought. And yet it must be much more impossible, if any thing more impossible can be supposed, to deceive, those, upon whom their Miracles had the Effect of restoring to them the Use of their Feet, their Sight, and their Health, and even of raising them again from the Dead.

And indeed, none of the Adversaries of old of the Christian Religion ever denied, but that Miracles were wrought by the Apostles; [f] they only disputed the Power by which they were wrought; they never question'd the Reality of the Miracles themselves. The Books of the New Testament, which give an Account of these wondrous Works, were written soon after the things related had been done, and these Books were in the hands of Heathens and Jews, as well as of Christians; and neither the Jews nor the Heathens could deny but that such Works had been done; they only cavill'd at the Power and Authority by which they were wrought; which, how groundless and unreasonable so ever it were, yet was the only Evasion they could have, when there were so many Christians, if they had denied the Matter of Fact, who did the like Miracles every day to confute them. For,

2. The Apostles not only wrought Miracles themselves, but convey'd to others a Power of Working them. Thus when St. *Peter* was sent for to *Cornelius*, *the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word*, and they *spake with Tongues, and magnified God*, Acts x. 44, 46. And so at *Ephesus*, the Holy Ghost came on those whom St. *Paul* had laid his hands upon, and *they spake with Tongues, and prophesied*, Acts xix. 6. And this miraculous Power was in that evident manner receiv'd by the laying on of the hands of the Apostles, that *Simon Magus* offer'd them Money to purchase it, *Acts* viii. 18. Now as the Apostles could neither be deceiv'd themselves in the Miracles which they did, nor deceive those, before whom they were perform'd, and upon whom they were wrought; so certainly they could never deceive such as they confer'd this Gift upon. When they not only did all sorts of Miracles, and spoke all Languages themselves, but convey'd a Power likewise upon others of speaking and doing, as themselves did; this was still a further Evidence

[f] Julian. apud Cyril. l. 3.

that

that all their Pretences were real beyond all possibility of Deceit.

Deceivers would never have done their Miracles so openly, and so frequently, at such a time and place; they would never have pretended to a Gift of Tongues at a Festival, where Men from all parts of the World were met together; so that they could attempt to speak in no strange languages, but some present would have discover'd them, if they had not been able to speak it. But they would least of all have pretended to enable others in an instant to work the same Wonders, and speak the same Tongues, only by laying their hands upon them. Men that would attempt all this, tho' they were unable to perform it, must be so far from being capable of discoursing and writing as the Apostles did, that they must be void even of common Sense; and if they could succeed in their designs, and make the World believe that they did act and speak in this manner, when they did not, they must have a Power over the Understandings and Senses of all with whom they convers'd; which is as strange even as this miraculous Power it self. They must work Miracles either upon the Objects of Sense, or upon the Senses themselves: for in this case, they could never have been able so much as to deceive without a Miracle. And since God would never have empower'd them to work Miracles to deceive, we are certain that their Miracles were all wrought for that intent and purpose, which they made profession of, and to confirm that Doctrine which they taught.

And this Power of Miracles, which now descended from Heaven upon the Apostles, and was convey'd by them to others, continu'd for some Ages in the Church, and prov'd it self to the worst Enemies of our Religion in such Instances, as must make them most concern'd to examine it. For as [h] the Christians

[h] Iren. l. 2. 56. c. 57. l. 5. c. 6.

had

had the Gift of Tongues, cast out Devils, and thereby converted those, out of whom they had been driven; as they foretold things to come, and cured Diseases, and raised the Dead, who lived many Years afterwards: so [i] several of the Primitive Writers witness, that nothing was more notorious, than that the Devils were wont to cry out for very Anguish and Torment, when they were adjur'd by the true God, and [k] *Tertullian* made publick Challenges to the Heathens, that if they would but admit them to this Trial, the Christians would undertake to make their most famous Deities acknowledge the Power of Christ, and to make their very Gods confess themselves to be wicked and seducing Spirits, or else they would be contented to be slain upon the Place; and this he wrote under Persecutions, and in Apologies dedicated and presented to their Persecutors themselves.

And indeed, the Oracles in all parts of the World soon began to fail, so as they had been never known to do before: for their Power began to abate and decay upon the approach of our Saviour's Birth into the World, till by degrees they quite ceas'd, which the Heathens wonder'd at, and were much perplex'd about it, as we learn from what [l] they have left written upon that Subject. And tho' *Julian* [m] the Apostate used all the ways that he could think of, to bring them into credit again, he was never able to effect it, but the most famous of them confess'd to him, when he consulted it, that a miraculous and divine Power residing in the Remains of a Christian Martyr after his Death, would suffer no Answer to be given. And it is so remarkable, that I must mention it once more, that when the same Apostate Emperor, in Hatred and Despite to the Christian Religion, became a great Pa-

[i] Minuc. Felix. Lactant. l. 2. c. 15.
[k] Apolog. c. 23. [l] Cicer. de Divinat. Plutarch. de Oracul. defectu. [m] Chrysost. in Babylam Martyr. Orat. 2. Soz. Hist. l. 5. c. 19.

tron

tron of the Jews, and encouraged them to re-build their Temple, great Balls of Fire broke forth near the Foundation, and destroy'd both the Work itself and the Persons employ'd in it. And this we have related, not only by several Christian Writers that lived about that time, but by an [n] Heathen Historian, who was then living, and wrote the History of those times, and has shewn himself in no respect over favourable to the Christians but was a Soldier under *Julian*, and had no Inclination to say any thing that might seem to diminish his Character. The Judgments also which befel several of the greatest Persecutors of the Christian Religion, were so miraculous and so terrible, as to extort a Confession from some of them, of God's Justice in their Punishment, and to force them to recal their persecuting Edicts, and change them for others in favour of Christianity. [o] The Edicts of *Maximianus* and *Maximin*, to this purpose, are to be seen in *Eusebius*; and [p] the Judgment upon *Julian* was so sudden and so remarkable, that some of the Heathen cavil'd, that the God of the Christians had not shewn that Mercy and Forbearance, which they reported of him, in it.

And when the Power of Miracles which came down on the Day of *Pentecost* upon the Apostles, and was continued in the Church after them, thus manifested it self in opposition to the Pretences both of the Jews and Heathens, in such a manner, as must provoke them to make all the Discoveries they possibly could, concerning it; when it thus triumph'd over all the Gods of the Heathen, whilst its poor and persecuted Professors were under the Feet of the Heathen Emperors, and lay continually exposed to their Cruelties, and at the Peril of their Lives, proffer'd in pub-

[n] Ammian. Marcellin. lib. xxiii. c. 1. citat. sup. p. 239.

[o] Euseb. Hist. lib. viii. c. 17. ix. c. 10. Lactant. de Mortib. Persec. c. xxxiv. xlix.

[p] Hieron. in Hab. c. iii.

lick

lick Apologies, by a miraculous Power, or, as the Apostle speaks, by the Power and Demonstration of the Spirit, to prove their own Religion true, and theirs false, and its cruelest Persecutors were by miraculous Judgments forc'd to become its Protectors; this was all that could be desired towards the fulfilling the Promise of our Saviour to his Apostles, that they should become his Witnesses to all Nations. But,

3. The Gospel could not have been thus propagated, unless this Power of the Holy Ghost had been still farther manifest by the Courage and Resolution, and Patience of the Apostles under their Sufferings. Our Saviour tells them, that they should *receive power after that the Holy Ghost was come upon them, to become witnesses unto him, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria.* These were the places where our Saviour himself had wrought his Miracles, and where he had been hated and persecuted, and at last crucified; and there is reason to believe, that the Apostles went not from *Jerusalem* and the parts adjacent, [q] till twelve years after his Ascension: And when they had testified his Resurrection, and preach'd his Gospel to the *Jews*, their Work was not yet at an end, but they were to be his Witnesses *unto the uttermost parts of the earth*; and even thither several of them went, fearing no Dangers, and being discouraged at no Sufferings.

There is a natural Boldness and Courage in some Men, by which they are often carried both to do and to endure a great deal more than others: But it was not so with the Apostles; they were naturally very timorous and faint-hearted, they all forsook their Master, and fled, when he was first apprehended, and they were very backward to believe his Resurrection: And when they and the rest of the Disciples were convinced of it, they did not preach it to o-

[q] Euseb. Hist. lib. 5. cap. 18.

thers;

thers; but after he had been seen of them forty days, and discoursed with them of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God, they still had mistaken Notions and Expectations concerning it: *when they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the Kingdom to Israel?* And when Christ was taken up from them, into Heaven, they stood gazing up after him, not knowing what to think of it, till two Angels admonish'd them, that it was in vain for them to stand looking thus any longer: And after his Ascension, they stay'd ten days before they ventur'd to publish any thing of what had come to pass, till on the day of *Pentecost*, in a visible and audible manner, the Holy Ghost descended upon them, and quite changed their Temper, and of the most timorous made them the most couragious and resolute, inspiring them with a Divine Vigour and Presence of Mind.

For of all their Miracles, few seem to have been more wonderful, than that Firmness and Constancy of Mind, which Men so low, and mean, and abject, and before so fearful, as the Apostles were, now shew'd, upon all occasions. When our Saviour spoke to these his poor Disciples, and commanded them to *go and teach all nations*, Mat. xxviii. 19. it was such a Command as no King nor Law-giver ever presum'd to give, in the Height of all his Power and Greatness: And when God himself sent *Moses* to the Children of *Israel* only, *Moses* fear'd the Success, and would fain have declin'd the Message. And how might the Disciples have reply'd to our Saviour, how shall we preach to the *Romans*, and dispute with the *Græcians*, and discourse with the most remote and barbarous Nations, who have been bred up in the Knowledge only of our own Native Tongue? How can we compel all Nations to forsake the Worship of the Gods of their several Countries, and to observe all things whatsoever we are commanded to teach them?

With

With what force of Eloquence are we fitted for such a Design? What Hope can we have to succeed in an Attempt to set up Laws in opposition to the Laws established for so many Ages, in behalf of their own Gods? What Strength can we have to overcome such Difficulties, and to accomplish such an Enterprize? But they made no Objections; our Saviour had convers'd with them forty Days, after his Resurrection, and now tells them, that all Power is given unto him in Heaven, and in Earth, and he commands them *not to depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which*, saith he, *ye have heard of me*, Acts i. 4. And when the Holy Ghost was come, they were endued by him with a Courage and Resolution almost as wonderful, as the Miracles they wrought, to perform the great Work which lay before them. They were not in the least daunted at any Dangers, or Torments, or Deaths, but went on couragiously in their Duty, by the Power and Assistance of the Holy Ghost, by whom they were enabled to bring the World to the Obedience of the Gospel of Christ: They opposed themselves to all the Assaults of Men and Devils: Nothing could now discourage them, who before were so timorous and unbelieving; the coming of the Holy Ghost down upon them, wrought a mighty Change in them, who were to work as great an Alteration in all the World besides. St. *Peter* standing with the Eleven, *lift up his Voice*, he spoke with wonderful Resolution, and the rest stood by to bear witness to the Truth of what he said. They stood now undaunted by, to testifie that their Master was again alive, who had forsaken him as soon as he was apprehended; and he that before so shamefully denied him thrice, being startled and affrighted at the Question of the High Priest's Maid, now speaks aloud in a vast Concourse of People, with so much Stedfastness, that this alone was a sufficient Evidence of the Truth of what he delivered. They were

not

not in the least concerned at the Mockery and Abuses that were put upon them, the Spirit had descended on them, and raised them above such mean and foolish Apprehensions; they were now full of the Holy Ghost, and no worldly Thoughts could move them, they acted with the Force and Vigour of the Wind and Fire, in which the Holy Ghost came upon them, and with as much Unconcernedness, as if they had no Difficulties to encounter: the World they very well knew and found was against them, but they had the Assurance of his Help, who had overcome the World. They were pressed on every side, with Want and Disgrace, and all manner of Hardships; some mock'd and reviled them, others tormented them, the Rage, the Tumults, the Conspiracies of whole Cities and Countries broke loose upon them, all the Malice and Contrivance of Men and Devils was joined against them; and yet with what Freedom doth St. *Peter* speak? *Ye men of Israel hear these words. Jesus of Nazareth, a Man approved of God among you by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye your selves also know: him being delivered by the determinate Counsel and fore-knowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain, whom God hath raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father, the promise of the Holy Ghost, he has shed forth this which ye now see and hear,* Acts ii. 22, 23, 24, 32, 33. And in the third Chapter, *The God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our Fathers hath glorified his Son Jesus, whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go. But ye denied the Holy One, and the just, and desired a Murtherer to be granted unto you, and killed the Prince of Life, whom God hath raised from the dead, whereof we are witnesses,* ℣ 13, 14, 15. And before the Council, *O ye Rulers*

of

of the People and Elders of Iſrael, if we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole; be it known to you all, and to all the people of Iſrael, that by the name of Jeſus Chriſt of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raiſed from the dead, even by him doth this man ſtand here before you whole. This is the ſtone which was ſet at nought by you Builders, which is become the head of the corner, neither is their Salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we muſt be ſaved, Acts iv. 8, *&c.* And again, *The God of our fathers raiſed up Jeſus, whom ye ſlew, and hanged on a tree; him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Iſrael, and forgiveneſs of ſins: And we are witneſſes of theſe things, and ſo is alſo the Holy Ghoſt, whom God hath given to them that obey him*, Acts v. 30, *&c.* With what Freedom and Authority doth he now ſpeak? How unlike is he now to the Man he was before, when he thrice denied his Maſter whilſt alive? And what could make ſuch an alteration in him after his Maſter's death, but a ſupernatural Power? What could cauſe him thus frequently and earneſtly to make an open confeſſion of him in the midſt of the People, and before their Council, if he had not known him to be riſen from the Dead, and had not done all his Miracles by virtue of that Power which was beſtowed upon him and the reſt of the Apoſtles, after Chriſt's Aſcenſion?

And the ſame Conſtancy and Greatneſs of Mind appeared in St. *Stephen*, and the reſt of the Diſciples; which yet was accompanied with equal Humility and Meekneſs: *Whether it be right in the ſight of God to hearken unto you, more than unto God, judge ye: for we cannot but ſpeak the things which we have ſeen and heard*, Acts iv. 19, 20. You may do your Pleaſure, but we muſt do our Duty: Nothing of Fury and Violence, nor of Wildneſs and Extravagancy, but a conſtant

constant Composedness and Gravity, and a rational sober Zeal, appeared in all their Behaviour. They told a plain Truth, and then wrought Miracles to confirm it; and afterwards suffered any Torments, rather than they would renounce it, or desist from preaching it. Though they could cure all Diseases, and dispossess Devils, and raise Men from the Dead, or take away their Lives with a word speaking, as in the case of *Ananias* and *Sapphira*; yet they were not exempted from Sufferings, because we must then have wanted one great argument for the Confirmation of our Faith. And the Gospel was to be founded upon Principles of Love and Goodness, not of Fear and Astonishment. There is something in the Sufferings of good Men, which is apt mightily to work upon the Affections, and upon any Seeds of good Nature in us; and therefore, when by their Miracles they had raised the Admiration of the Beholders, and convinced them of the Power by which they were wrought, their Patience under Sufferings not only confirm'd them in the Truth of Religion, but laid the Foundations of a religious Life, in gaining upon the Inclinations and Affections, and in calming the Spirits, and preparing them by so great Examples of Patience to endure all the Calamities incident to Men. Who is there, that is not more affected with the meek and humble Courage, and invincible Patience of the Apostles, than with all the great Acts of the mighty Conquerors and Destroyers of Mankind? A few poor, unarmed, defenceless Men, stand before armed Multitudes, and speak with as much Authority, as if all the Power of the World were in their hands; and indeed, all Power was in their hands, inasmuch as He assisted and inspired them, who is above All: They speak to Multitudes with as much Freedom as to one Man, and to all Nations with as much Ease as to one People.

And the same Holy Spirit who descended upon the

rest of the Apostles on the Day of *Pentecost*, descending upon St. *Paul*, at his Conversion, and gave that great Apostle so much Confidence and Resolution, so much Patience and Zeal under his Sufferings, which were so severe and terrible, that we can scarce read them with so little Horror as he underwent them; nay, as if he had been above all sense of Fear or Pain, *he took pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake.* 2 Cor. xii. 10.

Thus did the Holy Ghost fit and prepare the Apostles to be Witnesses to Christ, by inspiring them with all that Courage and Patience which was necessary for Men that were to declare an ungrateful and despised Truth, amongst those who would think themselves so much concern'd to oppose and suppress it. If they had wrought no Miracles, their Courage and Resolution might have pass'd for a groundless Confidence: and if they had not had the Courage to stand so resolutely to the Truth of what they deliver'd, their Miracles themselves might have become suspected; but acting by a divine Power, and being supported in all their Sufferings by a supernatural Constancy and Greatness of Mind, and being so suddenly changed and raised above themselves in all they did or suffered, and working the same change in others; they gave all the Evidence and Certainty of the Truth of the Doctrines they taught, that it was possible for Men to give.

As a Power of working Miracles was derived from the Apostles down upon their Disciples, so was the Spirit of Meekness and Patience under Afflictions communicated to them. S. *Peter*, writing to the Converts under much Distress, testifies, That their Faith in Christ made them happy and triumphant in the midst of all their Sufferings; *wherein*, says he, *ye greatly rejoyce, tho' now for a season (if need be) ye are in heavyness, through manifold temptations; that the tryal of your faith being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, tho' it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise,*

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and honour and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ; whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, tho' now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, 1 Pet. i. 6, 7, 8. And as other Histories are chiefly taken up in the Account of *Battles of Warriors, with confused Noise, and Garments rolled in Blood:* So the History of the Church for divers Ages, principally contains the most cruel Torments undergone, not only with the greatest Patience, but with the greatest Joy. And it is observable, that God was pleased not to raise up any Christian Emperor, 'till above three hundred Years after Christ, that he might shew, that the Religion which came from Heaven could need no human Aid, nor be suppress'd by any human Force; and that he might recommend the great Virtues of Meekness and Patience to the World, by the Examples of Men as eminent for these, as for the Miracles they wrought, and might instruct Mankind in a suffering Religion. For to assure the World of the Truth of it, he would not grant it Protection from Christian Emperours, 'till most of the Empire was become Christian, and Christianity had diffused it self into all the known Parts of the Earth. For before the last Persecution, begun by *Diocletian*, [o] the Church flourished as much, and had the Favour of the Court, and of Great Men, in as high a Degree almost as under *Constantine* himself; 'till their Prosperity caused their Sins, and these brought Persecution. But at last the Persecuting Emperors were forced by a divine Power, manifested in miraculous Diseases inflicted on them, to restore the Christians to their former Liberty, in their Worship of God; that so it might appear to all the World, that the Christian Religion needed no Patronage of Men; for God would compel its worst Enemies to become

[o] Euseb. Hist. l. 8. c. 1.

its Protectors, when he saw it fitting. And [p] when *Julian* made it his great aim and business to restore Paganism again in the World, he saw, to his Grief, how ineffectual all his Endeavours proved; he observed that the Christian Religion still retained a general esteem and approbation, and that the Wives, and Children and Servants of his own Priests themselves, were most of them Christians.

If any one then, upon a serious consideration of all Circumstances, can withstand the conviction of so great Evidence; I would only ask him, whether he believes any History or Relations of Matters of Fact, which he never saw, and desire him to shew what degrees of Certainty he can discern in any of them, which are not to be found here: And besides, to consider, that if in a vicious and subtile Age, a Doctrine so contrary to Flesh and Blood, by so weak and incompetent Means, could obtain so universally amongst Men of all Tempers, and Professions, and Interests, in all Nations of the World, against so violent opposition, without the help of Miracles; this is as great a Miracle as can be conceived: Either therefore the Christian Religion was propagated by Miracles, or it was not: If it was, then the Miracles by which it was propagated, prove it to be from God; if it was not propagated by Miracles, the Propagation it self is a Miracle, and sufficient to prove it to be from Him.

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[p] Sozom. l. 5. c. 16. & Julian. Epist. 49.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVII.

Of the Writings of the Apostles and Evangelists.

IT is justly esteem'd a sufficient reason for the credibility of any History, if it be written by Men of Integrity, Men who have no suspicion upon them of dishonesty, and have no temptation to deceive, and who relate nothing but of their own Times, and within their own Knowledge, tho' the Authors never suffer'd any loss, nor run any hazard, in asserting what they deliver. But the History of Christ has this farther Advantage, that many of the most considerable things in it were done in the sight of his Enemies; and that which is an History to future Ages, was rather an Appeal to that Age, whether the things related were true, or not.

The History of our Saviour's Life, and Death, and Resurrection, and Ascension, as it had been proved, was attested by his Apostles, to the faces of his very Crucifiers; and they all remained upon the Place, where what they witnessed had been done, for several Years afterwards, declaring and preaching to all People, the things which they had seen and heard. And soon after his Ascension, when all the Proceedings against him were fresh in memory, they committed the same to writing in *Greek*, which was the most [a] common Language, and generally known at that time. [b] St. *Matthew*, who first penn'd his Gospel, living among the *Jews*, is said to have written it in *Hebrew* or *Syriack*, (tho' it was soon after translated into

[a] *Quid sibi volunt in mediis Barbarorum regionibus Græcæ urbes? Quid inter Indos, Persasque Macedonicus sermo? Scythia——— civitates Achaiæ, Ponticis impositas litoribus ostentat——Athenienses in Asiâ Turba est.* Senec. Consolat. ad Helviam. init.

[b] Iren. l. 3. c. 1. Euseb. l. 3. c. 39. Cyril. Hieros. Catech. xiv. p. 195.

Greek) so that whoever of the *Jews* did not understand the *Greek* Tongue, might read the Gospel in their own Language. Nor long after, the other Gospels were penn'd, and they were all in a short time dispersed into the several parts of the World, and translated into all Languages. It is particularly related, [c] that St. *John*'s *Gospel*, and the *Acts of the Apostles*, were soon translated into the *Hebrew* Tongue.

The Evangelists give such an Account both of the Birth and Death of our Saviour, as must suppose them recorded at *Rome:* For there the Censual Tables were kept, where, by St. *Luke*'s Account, the Name of our Saviour must have been registerd; and his Death and Resurrection were so remarkable, as they relate them, that according to the Custom used in the Government of the *Roman* Provinces, the Emperor must have a Relation sent him of them; and (as I have shewn) both *Justin Martyr* and *Tertullian* appeal to the *Roman* Records for the Truth both of the Birth and Resurrection of our Saviour. The Memory of the Massacre of the Infants by *Herod*, is preserved to us by a saying of *Augustus* concerning *Herod* upon it [d], which is mentioned in *Macrobius* a Heathen Author. For *Augustus* was told, that among others, *Herod* had caus'd his own Child to be slain; which, whether true or no, gave occasion to the Emperor to make this Observation, That it was better to be *Herod*'s Swine than his Son. [e] The Reason why *Josephus* has given no Account of this Slaughter of the Infants, is supposed to be, because when *Herod* had before been guilty of so many and so great Cruelties, in killing so many of his Friends, of his Sons, and Wives, it seemed no extraordinary thing for him to slay the Male Infants, who were two Years old and under, in a small Town

[c] Epiphan. Hæres. Ebion. p. 119. Macrob. Saturn. lib. 2. c. 4. Sacr. c. 16.

[d] Vid. Budæum de Asse. l. 4

[e] Is. Voss. Chron.

or

or Village, and the adjacent Territory. *Tacitus* mentions our Saviour's Suffering under *Pontius Pilate*; and *Tertullian*, in his [f] Apology, tells the Heathens, that the miraculous Eclipse of the Sun, which was at Christ's Death, stood upon Record in their own Registers: Whether it were for the Strangeness of the thing, it being contrary to the Course of Nature, or that their Superstition had made it customary to register all the Eclipses which happened. It must be acknowledged, that the Passage in [g] *Josephus* concerning our Saviour, is not without its Difficulties: But at the same time, it must be own'd, that it is altogether as unaccountable, that he should give no Character of Christ himself, nor of Christians; who as we learn from *Tacitus*, *Suetonius*, and *Pliny*, were grown too considerable to be overlook'd by a *Jewish* Historian; who, according to all the Rules of History, ought to have mentioned them, as a numerous and prevailing Sect, at least, if he had no better Opinion of them. However, the Testimony given by *Josephus* to the Virtue and Piety of [h] St. *John Baptist*, must be admitted as unquestionable; since nothing can be brought against it, but the like might be rais'd by acute and busy Men, against any other Part of his History. In the *Antiquities* of *Josephus*, as we now have them, mention is twice made of our Blessed Saviour; once, [i] in his full Character; and a second time, [k] in styling St. *James*, *the Brother of Jesus*, *who is called Christ*. And next to these express Testimonies, (if they be rejected) his Silence is the best Evidence which could be expected or desired of him. This proves, at least, that he had nothing to write against Christ. For he, who forgot not the Story [l] of *Judas* of *Galilee*, and of [m] *Theudas*, would not have spared our Saviour, if the Accusations of the

[f] Tertull. Apolog. c. 21. [g] Antiq. lib. 18. c. 4.
[h] Antiq. lib. 18. c. 7. [i] Ib. c. 4. [k] Lib. 20. c. 8.
[l] Lib. 18. c. 1. [m] Lib. 20. c. 2.

Jews had been true. And he who gave so high a Character of St. *John Baptist*, and of St. *James*, whom he [n] styles *the Brother of Jesus, who is called Christ*; and ascribes the Destruction of *Jerusalem* to the Divine Vengeance inflicted for his Death and Martyrdom; could give no ill Account of *Jesus*, for whom St. *James* suffer'd. *Josephus* then seems to have follow'd *Gamaliel*'s Advice; *And now I say unto you, Refrain from these Men, and let them alone; for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought: but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it, lest haply ye be found even to fight against God. And to him they agreed*, Acts v. 38, 39. What other reason can be assign'd, why when Christ is spoken of by the *Roman* Historians of that Ages, an Account of him should be omitted by *Josephus*, who had much more occasion to mention him, and greater opportunities to find out the Truth of all that had been preach'd or written of him? This is said on Supposition, that these Testimonies of *Josephus* were not genuine, which I see no Reason to [o] suspect. * The Omission of the least mention of the Life and Miracles of Christ is the only Attestation that could be expected from *Justus Tiberiensis* in his *Jewish* Chronicle; but *Josephus* and he differ'd as much in their Writings, as in their Conduct and Part, which they took in the publick Affairs of their Country, during the War, which ended in the Ruin of the *Jewish* State and Government.

The Dumbness of *Zacharias* till the Circumcision of his Son *John the Baptist*, was a notorious, publick thing, and the People who waited for him, and marvell'd that he tarry'd so long in the Temple, perceiv'd at his coming out, that he had seen a Vision; and all things relating to that History, were *noised*

[n] Orig. contra Cels. lib. 1. & 2. c. 17. Macrob. l. 2. c. 4.

[o] Vid. Is. Voss. Chron. Sacr.

* Phot. Biblioth. cod. 33.

abroad

abroad through all the hill country of Judæa, Luke i. 21. That the Wise-men came from the East at the sight of the Star; that *Herod* heard of this, and was troubled at it; and all *Jerusalem* with him; that he gather'd all the Chief-Priests and Scribes together, and demanded of them, where Christ should be born; and that they answer'd, *At Bethlehem of Judæa*; citing the Prophecy of *Micah*; that *Herod*, when he had enquired of the Wise-men concerning the Star, and enjoin'd them to bring him word where the young Child was, being disappointed by their returning home another way, *slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old, and under:* These are things of that publick nature, that it was impossible they should be feign'd, when St. *Matthew*'s Gospel was first publish'd. If they had not been true, thousands must have been able to contradict them, and discover the Falshood of them. When Matters of Fact are related, with so many manifest and publick Circumstances, it is an Appeal to the World for the Truth of what is written; and no Man of common sense would contrive a false Story with such publick Circumstances, as that every Reader may be able to disprove it. If any Man should affirm, that in such a City or Village in *England*, at the Command of such a King, and at such a time, within our Memory, all the Infants, from two Years old and under, were murther'd, he must scarce expect to be believ'd, or to confirm any thing else he has to deliver, by such a Fiction to introduce it.

The triumphant Shouts and *Hosanna*'s of the Multitude at Christ's Entrance into *Jerusalem*, whereby *all the city was moved*, Matt. xxi. 10, 11. immediately before the Passover, when there was the greatest Concourse of People, was a thing that could not soon be forgotten: At the same time *he drove out all that sold and bought in the Temple, and overthrew the tables of the Money-*

Money-changers; and when he was in the Temple, *the blind and the lame came to him and he healed them*; and *the Chief-priests and Scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the Children crying in the Temple, Hosannah to the Son of David, and they were sore displeased* at it. The Evangelists would never have brought in the Chief-Priests and Scribes themselves, with the whole People of *Jerusalem*, and the vast Numbers of *Jews* and Proselytes out of all Nations, assembled at the Passover, as Spectators and Witnesses of these things, if they had not been so certain of them as to appeal to them all, for the Truth of what they relate, so lately, and so solemnly and publickly done.

The Darkness of the whole Earth for three Hours together, in the midst of the Day, the Veil of the Temple's being rent from the top to the bottom, the Earthquake, and the rending of the Rocks, and the opening of the Graves, are things that must have been generally known, and could not be feign'd; or if any Man can be so vain as to imagine they might, let him but consider, whether such things could now be imposed upon any People, by the Writings of a few Men, as done in the Metropolis of a Nation, at a solemn Time, within the Memory of thousands yet living, who are able to contradict them, from their own certain Knowledge. If a Man should pretend, that but a few Years ago, in the chief City of any Kingdom or Nation, one part of the principal Church was rent from the bottom to the top, by an Earthquake, which tore asunder the Rocks, and open'd the Graves of the Dead, and that at the same time, the Moon being in that Position that the Sun could suffer no Eclipse, the Sun was darken'd from twelve at Noon, to three in the Afternoon, could he hope to gain any Credit or Belief to any Doctrine he had to propagate, by feigning such Circumstances, as would put it into the Power of every Man that heard of them to disprove him? Would not this be the readiest and

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the most effectual way he could possibly invent, to expose himself and his Cause.

The Death of *Judas*, and the Cause and Manner of it, which is so clear a Vindication of our Saviour, and so plain a Proof that he is the Chrst, *was known unto all the dwellers of Jerusalem, insomuch as that field was called in their proper tongue, Aceldama, that is to say, the field of Blood*, Acts i. 19. Matt. xxvii. 8. If this Field had not been so called, and this had not been well known at *Jerusalem*, would any Man have written in this manner?

And besides the Twelve Apostles, and the Seventy Disciples, who all believed and attested the Truths contain'd in the Evangelists, many Persons of Authority and Note among the *Jews* are mentioned, who would have found themselves concerned to disprove what is related, if it had been false. *Nicodemus* is said to have come to Christ by Night, who was a Pharisee, and *a Ruler of the Jews*, John iii. 2. vii. 50. xix. 39. And to put this Mark upon him three several times, That he came to *Jesus* by Night, and durst not own his coming to him, was no flattering Character, or such as might engage *Nicodemus* or his Friends to dissemble the Injury, if it had not been true that *Nicodemus* was his Disciple. The like is said of *Joseph* of *Arimathæa*, a rich Man, and an honourable Counsellor, *Matt.* xxvii. 57. *Mar.* xv. 43. that he was *a Disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews*, Joh. xix. 38. *Herod* and *Pontius Pilate*, *Annas* and *Caiaphas*, and several other Persons particularly named, and most of them with no Commendation, but with that Character, which the Truth of the History required, would be concern'd themselves, or their Friends and Relations for them, after their Decease, to expose any Falshood, that could have been discovered in the History of our Saviour.

The other Books of the New Testament are explicatory and consequential to the Gospel or History of

of Christ; and besides they contain many memorable and publick Facts, as the speaking of all sorts of Languages, and working all kinds of Miracles at the solemn Feast of *Pentecost*, and the Conversion of many thousands thereby, the frequent Examination of the Apostles before the Council at *Jerusalem*, their Preachings and Miracles in the most publick places, as in the Temple, in the Streets, *&c.* these are things that could not be imposed upon the World in that very Place, and in defiance of that very People, before whom they are said to have been done. *Gamaliel*, *Manaen*, who had been brought up with *Herod* the *Tetrarch*, *Dionysius* the *Areopagite*, *Sergius Paulus*, *Simon Magus*, *Felix*, King *Agrippa*, *Tertullus*, *Gallio*, and others, were Names of too great Note and Fame to be used in a false Story in which they are so much concern'd. And all their Proceedings in the Courts of Judicature were kept upon Record, and therefore could not be pretended, (without being discover'd) by those who always had so many Adversaries.

The miraculous Power bestow'd upon the Apostles was chiefly employ'd in curing Diseases, and for the Health and Preservation of Mankind; but they had a Power of inflicting Diseases likewise, and Death it self, upon just Occasions, as in the case of *Ananias* and *Sapphira*, Acts v. Of *Elymas* the Sorcerer, *Acts* xiii. And the incestuous *Corinthian*, 1 Cor. v. And when this was done by private Men, and divulg'd to the World, with the Names of the Persons who inflicted Diseases and Death it self, and of those on whom they were inflicted; this is an Evidence both of the Truth of the Matter of Fact, and of the Power by which it was done: for no Author could think to serve his Friend or his Cause, by relating things of this nature, unless they had been evidently done in a miraculous Manner, and by a Divine Commission and Authority.

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The Conversion of St. *Paul* was a thing so memorable, both for the Manner of it, and for the Business he was going about, and the Persons that employ'd him, and for his known Zeal at other times, in persecuting the Church, that St. *Paul* appeals to King *Agrippa*, as one who could not be ignorant of a thing so notorious, *Acts* xxvi. 26. And it was the great Providence and Wisdom of God, that a Man so well known and esteemed by the Pharisees and Chief Priests before his Conversion, should be the [p] greatest Instrument, both by his Preaching and Writings, for the Propagation of the Gospel; and both his Epistles, and the other Books of Holy Scripture, have the same Proof, from the Observations already mention'd, concerning the Names and Characters of Persons, and other Circumstances. And they were always read in the Assemblies of Christians, and were appointed to be read in them, *Coloss.* iv. 16. 1 *Thess.* v. 27. And the Writings both of him, and of the Evangelists, and the other Apostles, are cited by Authors contemporary with the Apostles, by *Barnabas* an Apostle himself, and by *Clemens Romanus*, *Ignatius*, *Polycarp*, &c. And they have been acknowledg'd to be the genuine Works of those whose Names they bear, both by *Jews* and Heathens, and particularly by *Tryphon* the *Jew*, in his Dialogue with *Justin Martyr*; and by *Julian* [q] the Apostate. It is enough in this place to observe, that (excepting some very few Books, of

[p] Μεγαλη μεν Πετρε και Ἰωαννε μαξ]υρια, ἀλλ' ὑποπ]ᾳ τις ἡν. οἰκειοι γαρ ἡσαν. τε δε πρ]τερε ἐχθρε, ὑστερε δε ὑπερασπιστ]ᾳ, τις ἐτι ἀμφιβαλλ[πρ]ς την ἀληθειαν; ὀνταυθα γειομ]ᾳ τε λογε τεθαυμακα ἀληθως την τε ἁγιε πνευματ]ᾳ οἰκονομιαν· πως τας μεν των ἀλλων ἐπιστολας, εἰς ὀλιγον ἀφιεγραψεν ἀριθμον. Παυλ]ᾳ δε τ]ᾳ πρ]τερε διακ]ῃ γραψαι δεκαεσσαρας ἐπιστολας ἐχαρισατ]. ἐ γαρ ὁτι ἡτ]ων ἡν Πετρ]ς και Ἰωαννης, ὠνεκοψε την χαριν, μη γενοι]· ἀλλ' ὑπερ τε ἀναμφιβολον εἰναι την διδασκαλιαν, τ]ᾳ πρ]τερε ὀνατι ἐχθρ]ᾳ και διακ]ῃ, πλειον ἐχαρισατ] γραφειν, ἱνα πανλες ἡτ]ω πιστοποιθ]μεν. Cyrill. Hier. Catech. x. § 8. [q] Apud Cyril. lib. x.

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which an Account shall elsewhere be given) the Books of the Scriptures of the New Testament have been received as genuine, from their first Appearance in the World, during the Lives of their several Authors, and have been delivered down for such thro' the several Ages of the Church. In the main, they have been so unanimously received, and so fully attested by Christians, that the Jews and Heathens themselves never denied them to be genuine, nor ever pretended the principal Matters of Fact to be false or doubtful. [r] Many of the Eye-witnesses to the Miracles of our Saviour and his Apostles, lived to a great Age; St. *John* himself above an hundred Years, and he preached the Gospel above seventy Years. [s] St. *James* was Bishop of *Jerusalem* thirty Years. St. *Ignatius* was Bishop of *Antioch* more than forty Years. *Simeon*, the Son of *Cleopas* lived to an hundred and twenty Years, and *Polycarp* the Disciple of St. *John*, at his [t] Martyrdom profess'd, that he had been a Servant of Christ fourscore and six Years; and he was Bishop above sixty Years, as it appears from St. *Ignatius*'s Epistles, whom he surviv'd about that number of Years. [u] And *Irenæus*, in an Epistle to *Florinus*, a Heretick, who had considerable Employments in the Emperor's Court, declared, that he remembred exactly what he had heard *Polycarp* discourse, concerning the Account of the Miracles and Doctrine of our Saviour, which he had receiv'd from St. *John*, and others, who had convers'd with Christ; and that it differ'd in nothing from the Scriptures.

And besides the inspired Writings, the chief Points of the Christian Religion were testify'd in Apologies written from time to time, to the Heathen Empe-

[r] Euseb. l. 3. c. 29. Hieron. adv. Jovin. l. 1.
[s] Hieron. Catal. [t] Euseb. l. 4. c. 15.
[u] Iren. l. 3. c. 3. Euseb. l. 5. c. 20.

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rors themselves. [w] *Quadratus* a Disciple of the Apostles, and Bishop of *Athens*, in his Apology to the Emperor *Adrian*, declared, that Persons, who had been healed by our Saviour, and others, who had been raised from the Dead by him, were still living in his Time. And his Apology, being delivered to that Emperor, had such Effect, as to put a Stop to the Persecution then raging against the Christians. *Aristides* presented an *Apology* to that Emperor [x] at the same time at *Athens*. [y] *Justin Martyr* wrote two Apologies, the first dedicated to *Antoninus Pius* and his two Sons, and the *Roman* Senate; the latter to *M. Antoninus* and the Senate; and [z] he had the good Success to deliver the Church at that time from Persecution. [a] *Melito*, Bishop of *Sardis*, and *Apollinaris* Bishop of *Hierapolis*, likewise wrote a Vindication of the Christian Religion to *M. Antoninus*. *Athenagoras* offer'd his Apology to *M. Aurelius* and *Commodus*; [b] *Miltiades* to *Commodus*, or to the Deputies of the Provinces. [c] *Apollonius*, a *Roman* Senator, made a publick Defence of the Christian Religion in the Se-

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[w] Euseb. Hist. lib. iv. c. 3. *Quadratus Apostolorum Discipulus, & Athenienſis Pontifex Ecclesiæ nonne Adriano Principi Eleusinæ sacra invisenti librum pro nostrâ Religione tradidit? Et tantæ admirationi omnibus fuit, ut persecutionem gravissimam illius excellens sedaret ingenium.* Hieron. ad Magnum Ep. Vid. Oros. lib. vii. c. 13.

[x] Τῳ (Hadriano) Κοδρατῳ λογον προσφωνησας ἀναδιδωσιν, ἀπολογιαν συνταξας ὑπερ της καθ' ἡμας θεοσεβειας. Euseb. Hist. l. 4. c. 3. *Cúmque Hadrianus Athenis exegisset hyemem——porrexit ei librum pro Religione nostrâ compositum (Quadratus).* Hieron. *Cat.* Aristides—— *volumen nostri dogmatis rationem continens, eodem tempore, quo & Quadratus Hadriano Principi dedit*, id. ib. & Euseb. ib.

[y] Ἰωσιν δ δυτερον ὑπερ των καθ' ἡμας δογματων Βιβλιον ἀναδως τοις δεδηλωμενοις ἀρχουσι. Euseb. ib. c. 16.

[z] Oros. l. 7. c. 14. Chron. Alexandr.

[a] Euseb. l. 4. c. 26. Antonino Imperatori Melito Asianus Sardicensis Episcopus Apologeticum pro Christianis tradidit. Euseb. Chron. A. D. 131. [b] Id. lib. 5. c. 17.

[c] Hier. Catal. Euseb. l. 5. c. 21.

nate of *Rome*, and *Tertullian* presented his Apology to the Senate, or to the Governors of the Provinces. * *Lucian* Presbyter of *Antioch* exhibited a Defence of his Faith and Doctrine to *Maximin* at the time of his Martyrdom. And the Apologists did not dwell only upon generals, but descended to such particulars, as to appeal to the publick Records for the truth of what they delivered concerning the place of our Saviour's Birth, and the manner of his Death, and his Resurrection, [d] and to give an account of the Christian Worship, and of the celebration of the Eucharist itself; so that the Principles and Foundations of the Christian Religion, were from the beginning asserted in publick Writings, dedicated and presented to the Heathen themselves, who were most concerned and most capable of disproving it, if it had been false. [e] And though the Acts which were forged under the Emperor *Maximin*, and pretended to be *Pilate*'s, but bearing [f] date divers Years before *Pilate* was Governour of *Judæa*, were by his command sent into all the Provinces of his Empire, and published in all places, and order'd to be taught Children, and to be learnt by heart by them, yet all this malicious Care and Contrivance was ineffectual to the suppressing the Truth of the History of our Saviour, which was so well attested, and so fully published amongst all sorts of Men, that it was impossible to extirpate the Belief of it. And this Emperor himself (as I before shew'd) was, by miraculous Diseases inflicted on him, forced to retract by a publick Edict, his Practices against Christianity, and to acknowledge that his Sins and Blasphemies against Christ, were the just Cause of his Punishment.

* Euseb. lib. 9. c. 6. Hieron. Catal.
[d] Justin. Apol. 1. [e] Euseb. lib. 9. c. 5, & 7.
[f] Euseb. l. 1. c. 9.

CHAP.

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CHAP. XVIII.

Of the Doctrines contained in the Holy Scriptures.

THE Scriptures must be acknowledg'd by all considerate Men, to contain excellent Rules and Precepts for the Government of our Lives, and it cannot be denied that it is to these we owe the Peace and Happiness we enjoy, even in this World. It is therefore the Interest of every good and prudent Man to wish the Christian Religion true, though it were not so, and there can be no Cause to wish it false, but our own Sin and Folly. And this of it self is a good Argument that it is true, because it is for the Benefit of Mankind that it should be so, and upon that account it carries the visible Characters of Divine Wisdom and Goodness in it: for it is certain, that the Religion, which God has established in the World, must be of this Nature, that none but wicked Men can dislike it, and that all sober and good Men must be well satisfied with it, and mightily inclined to believe it; nay even the worst Men must be forced to confess, that they owe their own Safety and Protection to the Doctrines of it. And that such is the Nature of the Christian Religion, will be evident, if we consider, that, I. It teaches an universal Righteousness both towards God and Man. II. It layeth down the only true Principles of Holiness. III. It proposeth the most effectual Motives. IV. It affords the greatest Helps and Assistances to an holy Life. V. It expresseth the greatest Compassion and Condescension to our Infirmities. VI. The Propagation of the Gospel has had mighty Effects towards the Reformation and Happiness of Mankind. VII. The highest Mysteries of the Christian Religion are not merely speculative, but have a necessary Relation to Practice, and were revealed for the Advancement of Piety and Virtue amongst Men.

I. The Christian Religion teacheth an universal Righteousness both towards God and Man. It teacheth us the Nature of God, that he is a Spirit, and therefore ought to be worshipped in Spirit and in Truth; and gives us an Account of the Power, and Wisdom, and Goodness of God, in the Creation of the World, and in the various Dispensations of his Providence in the Preservation and Government of it, and especially in the wonderful Work of our Redemption. God is represented in the Scriptures, as *slow to anger, and great in power, and who will not at all acquit the wicked*, Nahum i. 3. And we are required to love and serve him with all our Abilities both of Body and Mind, *Deut.* vi. 5. *Matth.* xxii. 37.

The Duties of Men towards one another, are no less strictly enjoin'd, than our Duty towards God himself: For the Scriptures oblige all Men to the conscientious Performance of their several Duties, in their respective Capacities and Relations: They teach Wives and Children, and Subjects and Servants, Obedience, *not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake*; and they teach Princes and Husbands, and Fathers and Masters, a proportionable Care, and Kindness, and Affection; they check and restrain the Rich and Powerful from Violence and Oppression, and command them to relieve those that are in Want, and to protect all that are in Distress; and to root up the very Seeds and Principles of Vice in us; they regulate our Desires, and give Laws to our Words, and Looks, and Thoughts; they command an universal Love and Charity towards all Mankind, to hurt no Body so much as in Thought, but to do all the good which is in our Power; they oblige Men to do as they would be done unto in all Cases, to consider others as Men of the same Nature with themselves, and to love and respect them accordingly upon all occasions. I may add (what *Grotius* has not omitted

mitted) that more Favour and Equity is extended to one half of Human Kind by the Christian Religion, than ever had been by any other: For Bills of Divorce were permitted to the *Jews*, *because of the hardness of their hearts*; and among Infidels, Women are esteem'd but as Slaves to the Lusts of Men, who may have as many Wives as they please, and change them as often as they think fit.

II. The Scriptures propound to us the only true Principles of Holiness: For they teach us to perform all Duties both towards God and Man, upon Principles of Love and Charity, which are the only Principles that can make Men happy in the performance of their respective Duties, and that can cause them to persevere in it. What Men do upon Principles of Love, they do with delight; and what Men delight in, they will be sure to do: But fear hath Torment; and Men will use all Arts to get rid of their Fears, and of that sense of Duty which proceeds only from an Apprehension of Punishments, and therefore is perpetually grievous and burthensome to them: Rewards themselves may become ineffectual, by Proposals of contrary Rewards; for smaller Advantages, which are present and in hand, may be more prevalent than never so much greater, which are future, and looked upon only at a distance. But a sense of Love, and Gratitude, and Charity, can never fail of its effect, because this brings its Rewards with it, and makes our Duty a Delight. He who loves God, will certainly obey him; and he that does not love him, never can truly obey him as he ought, but will be ever repining at his Duty, and will be for seeking all Pretences to excuse himself from it. He who doth not love his Neighbour, will be for taking all Opportunities of pursuing his own Advantage against him; but he who loves him as himself, will never do him any Injury: *He that loveth another, hath fulfilled the law: For this, thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not kill, thou*

shalt not steal, thou shalt not bear false witness, thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other Commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying; namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thy self. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour, therefore love is the fulfilling of the law, Rom. xiii. 8. The Love of God, and of our Neighbour, comprehends the whole Duty of Man; which is a Doctrine no where to be met withal, but in the Holy Scriptures: All the Wisdom of Philosophers could never discover this Doctrine, which sets before us the only infallible Principles of Obedience. And it must be a most gracious and wise Law, which makes Love the Principle and Foundation of our whole Duty both towards God and Man; and has ordained this, as the only fit Means to qualifie and prepare us for the Fruition of God himself, and of one another, in Heaven to all Eternity.

III. The Christian Religion propoſeth the most effectual Motives to Obedience and Holiness of Life. The moral Reason and Arguments for a virtuous Life are so great and evident, that those who live otherwise, are generally convinced, that they ought not to do it: But because the Arguments from Reason are too faint and lifeless, to oppose to Sense and Passion; therefore the Christian Religion is purposely fitted to every Faculty, and presents us with greater Objects of Fear, and Love, and Desire, than any thing in the World can do. And as God will be served by us, upon no other *Principle* but that of Love; so the chiefest *Motive* to our Obedience, express'd throughout the Scriptures, is the Divine Love. They represent to us all the Methods which God has been pleased to use, as necessary to reclaim the World by, his Mercies and his Judgments, by sending his Prophets *at sundry times, and in divers manners*, and at last, by sending his own Son. He saw the Fondness that Men have for this World, and for the Pleasures and Sins of it; how subject they are to Temptations,

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and how prone to comply with them; and therefore he has been pleased to pursue us with the Endearments of his Love, and with such Condescensions of Grace and Favour, as must needs mightily affect the most obstinate Sinner, who had but the Sense and Gratitude of a Man left in him to consider them; and then he has denounced his Wrath and Vengeance against all such, as will not be led and persuaded to their own Happiness, by the infinite Love of Christ. He was born, he lived, he died for us; he has procured our Pardon, he proffers us his Grace and Assistance, he promises us eternal Happiness with himself in Heaven, upon our Obedience: and last of all, he threatens us with eternal Misery, if we will not be happy; thus forcing us, as it were, to Happiness, if we will not be persuaded to it; for this is all the Force that free Agents are capable of. And if all that infinite Love could do to excite our Love, if all the Rewards that infinite Mercy and Goodness could propose, and the severest Punishments that Almighty Vengeance can inflict, will not prevail with Men to follow Virtue, and refrain from Vice, nothing can possibly prevail with them. Love is most apt to produce Love, and hopes of Reward have a mighty Effect upon Men of any good Temper and Disposition; but the Fears of Punishment are wont to work upon the very worst Men: And where infinite Loving-kindness, eternal Rewards, and eternal Punishments, do all concur to bring Men to the Practice of Virtue, no Motive can be wanting, by which human Nature is capable of being wrought upon.

IV. The Christian Religion affords the greatest Helps and Assistances to an Holy Life. The Devil and his Angels are not more maliciously watchful and diligent with their Assaults and Temptations, to contrive and promote our Destruction, than the good Angels are careful and active to protect us against their Attempt, and secure our Salvation; which they are

concerned, and employed to do, by God's express Commission and Appointment: *Are they not all ministring Spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of Salvations?* Heb. i. 14. And God himself, who is a Spirit, and is the Author of the Being, and of the Life and Motion of all things, doth more especially act upon the Spirits and Minds of Men, by putting into them good Desires, and by inclining their Hearts to keep his Commands, and perform his Will. This Grace and Favour of God towards us, this spiritual Aid and Strength, is sufficient to enable us to conquer Sin, and overcome Temptations. And we are exhorted to *come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain Mercy, and find grace to help in time of need*, Hebr. iv. 16. which we are assured, shall be bestowed upon us for Christ's sake, through his Merits, and by virtue of his Mediation and Intercession. All the World has been sensible of the great Proneness in human Nature to Evil, and backwardness to what Reason it self seems to dictate as good and fit to be done; but the Christian Religion only has provided a Remedy to cure this great Corruption of our Nature, and assist us in the Performance of our Duty.

V. The Christian Religion expresseth the greatest Compassion and Condescension to our Infirmities. Christ died to make Satisfaction for our Sins, and to procure acceptance with God for us, upon our Repentance. He intercedes for us, and pleads the Merits of his own Death and Passion in our behalf; *we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our Sins*, though they be never so great and heinous, if we do but truly repent of them, and forsake them. And the Sins of Ignorance, and Surprize, and Infirmity, are not inconsistent with the Terms of Salvation; but a general Humiliation and Repentance, with a constant and sincere Endeavour to serve and please God, will, through Christ's Merits,

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be accepted of by him; for such Sins as we have no sufficient Means or Ability of knowing to be Sins, and for such as by reason of the Frailty of our Nature, we cannot live wholly free from, nothing is required of us, but a sincere and honest Diligence to do what we can, and a lively Faith to rely upon Christ's Merits, for the pardon of what Sins we are not able wholly to avoid.

Men are forward to complain of the Uneasiness of the Christian Yoke, without any true Experience and Trial of it, and without considering the Principles, and Motives, and Helps, and the condescending and gracious Terms which the Gospel proposes. Indeed, to lay some Injunctions and Restraints more than are absolutely necessary, is but what all Law-givers have done. For some things are forbidden, as a Prevention and a Preservative from the Commission of Sin, and others commanded as preparatory Qualifications and Dispositions to Virtue, and to make the Practice of it more easie and certain to us. And if Men are allowed in all Government to have this Authority, certainly God, who has an absolute Power over us, and perfectly knows what is necessary for our good, and for the ends of his Government, and has promised Rewards to the Obedient, infinitely greater than any that human Law-givers can propose; has an undeniable Right to forbid or command us some things, which by the Law of Nature we might have been allowed or excused from. But these are very few, and, all things considered, no Religion ever was so compassionate and easie as the Christian Religion.

VI. The Propagation of the Gospel has ever had great Effects towards the Reformation and Happiness of Mankind. What could be more beneficial to the World, and more for the Peace and Happiness of all Mankind, than to be taught to live under a perpetual Sense and Awe of the Love and Fear of God, and to be

constrained to perform our several Duties to each other, in our respective Capacities and Relations, with the utmost Fidelity and Integrity; and to have this enforced upon the Consciences of Men by the Hopes and Terrors of a future Judgment, and an eternal State of Happiness or Misery, as they shall prove obedient, or disobedient? These then must be acknowledg'd to be Doctrines most worthy of God, and the proper Subject of a Revelation. For however Men may wish, as to themselves in particular, that they had not been abridg'd their sinful Pleasures, yet in respect to the common Good of Society, it must needs be confess'd by the most inveterate Enemies of Christianity, and by those who will believe nothing of another Life, that if the Christian Religion were as generally practised, as it is profess'd, it would make Mankind as happy as it is possible for Men to be in this Life, through the Belief and Expectation of a Life to come. And as much as the Practice of the Christian Religion has been neglected, it is so far from being a Speculative Notion only, that it has a real and perpetual Influence for the Good of the World, even in the worst and most degenerate Ages.

We are not, at this distance of time, easily made sensible, how great Blessings the Christian Religion brought to Mankind, in that Reformation which it soon introduced into the World. For upon their Conversion, there became such a visible Alteration in the Tempers and Lives of Men, that they seem'd to have changed their very Natures, and to be born again, and become new Creatures; from whence Conversion is styl'd Regeneration. This the Apologists generally insist upon, that the Converts to Christianity became quite other Men, and practis'd all kinds of Virtue with incredible Zeal, tho' they had been never so vicious and profligate before. The Christians are represented as an Innocent, devout and charitable Sort

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of Men by [a] *Pliny*, *Lucian*, and *Julian* the Apostate himself; by those who had most narrowly enquired into their Doctrines and Practices, and were worst affected to them. Hospitals and other Foundations of Charity, now so common in the World, are owing to Christianity; for [b] *Julian* the *Apostate* propos'd the Christians as an Example herein to his Priests, when he would have Structures erected among the Heathen for such purposes. By these means, the Christians became as so many Lights in the World, to guide and direct others in the ways of Virtue: for by their Example and Doctrine, they soon reform'd even the Heathen World to a great degree. Morality was taught by the Philosophers in much greater Perfection than ever it had been before; and they became so much ashamed of the Grossness of their idolatrous Worship, that they sought out all Arts to refine and excuse it. And those Vices, which made up so great a part of their idolatrous Mysteries, appear'd too abominable to pass any longer for Religion. The Oracles soon ceas'd, and the seducing Spirits confessed, that they were hindred from giving out their Answers by the Power of Christ; and all that *Julian* the Apostate could do, was ineffectual to bring the Heathen Oracles into Reputation again. These are things before insisted upon, and so notorious in History, that they cannot be denied to be solely owing to the Power and Influence of the Christian Religion.

I shall mention but one Instance more; and that is, the barbarous Cruelty of the Heathen Religions, from which the Gospel has delivered the World. For they were wont to offer up innocent Men and Children in Sacrifice to their false Gods, and that frequently, and in some places daily, and in times of

[a] Plin. Epist. ad Trajan. lib. 10. Epist. 97. Lucian. de Morte Peregrini. [b] Greg. Naz. Steliteut. 1. Jul. Epist. 49. & Frag. Epist. Lipsi. Edit.

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great Danger, and upon extraordinary Occasions, they sacrific'd so great numbers of Men at once, that it would be incredible, if we had not the Authority of the best Historians for the Truth of it. And this Custom of sacrificing Men to their Gods, prevail'd not only here in *Britain*, and in other Countries, which were accounted barbarous, but all over *Greece*, and in *Rome* it self. It may well seem strange to us now, that such a Practice should so generally prevail in the World, yet nothing is more certain from all History, than that it did prevail, and that Men were with difficulty brought off from it. For when Mankind was thus cruelly tyrannized over by bloody *Dæmons*, nothing but the omnipotent Mercy of God could rescue them. And *for this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the Works of the Devil*, 1 Joh. iii. 1. which he soon did. Beasts and Idols were no longer worshipped, and Men were no longer made Sacrifices, when once Christianity began to appear in its full Power and Efficacy in the World. The plain and humble Doctrine of him that was laid in a Manger, and died upon a Cross, was in a short time more effectual to reform Mankind, than all the Precepts of Philosophers, and the Wisdom and Power of Law-givers had ever been.

Those Enemies to their own Souls, who are so fond of little Cavils against the Gospel, as if they were resolv'd not to be saved by it, yet owe the Happiness of this present Life in great measure to its Influence; they would not have been so safe in their Bodies and Estates, nay, perhaps they might have been sacrificed to some cruel *Dæmon* long before this, if that Religion which they resolve to despise, but will not be at the pains to understand, had not been believed by wiser and better Men: Of so great Advantage has the Gospel been to those, who will not be reclaim'd and converted by it. It has destroy'd the Works of the Devil, and has dispossess'd him of that Tyranny

Tyranny which he held over Mankind; it has made the unconverted World less vicious, and has banish'd all the profess'd Patrons and Deities of Wickedness from amongst Men; it has made Idolatry less practis'd and reduced it to narrower Bounds, confining it to the remoter Parts of the Earth; and every where, upon the first Approach of the Gospel, the evil Spirits are disarmed of their Power, and flee away before it, as we learn from the History of *Lapland*, and other Countries. So general a Blessing is the Gospel of Christ, that even Unbelievers are the better for it in this World, tho' they exclude themselves from the Benefit of it in the next. And the Christian is the only Religion against which the common Objection concerning the Prejudices of Education in favour of it, cannot be urged: For as it first prevailed in the World, by conquering all the Prejudices of Education, so it still maintains it self against all the Opposition that corrupt Nature, and a vicious Education, can make to it.

Indeed it may seem a needless thing, to have been thus large in the Proof of the Excellency of the practical Doctrines contain'd in the Scriptures; when God know this is the greatest Exception, that most Men have against them: And if the Precepts were not so strict and holy, but they might be allowed to live in their Sins, half the Evidence we have for the Authority of the Scriptures would satisfy them.

VII. The highest Mysteries of the Christian Religion are not merely speculative, but have a necessary Relation to Practice, for the Advancement of Piety and Virtue amongst Men. As there is nothing in the practical Duties taught and enjoin'd by the Scriptures, but what is most excellent and worthy of God, and which has rais'd and improv'd the Nature of Man beyond what could have been attain'd to without it; so the speculative Doctrines have as evident Characters of the Wisdom and Goodness of God,

God. They all tend to the Advancement of our Nature, to make us better, more wise, and more happy; and are not designed to gratify a vain and useless Curiosity, but to excite in us the Love of God, and a Care and Concernment for our own Happiness. They set before us the Original and Creation of all things, the Innocence in which Man was first created, and God's Love and Compassion to him after his Fall; how the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are concern'd in our Redemption; that the Father sent his Son, that the Son was born, that he liv'd a despised and persecuted Life, and at last underwent for us a most shameful and grievous Death; that he rose again and ascended into Heaven, and there continually intercedes for us, and that he sent the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, who supports and assists us under all Temptations and Dangers in our way thither, and will, if we be not wanting to our selves, safely conduct us to Heaven, there to reign with Christ in eternal Bliss and Glory, both of Body and Soul; but if we will be disobedient, and obstinate to our own Ruin, we must be eternally tormented with the Devil and his Angels.

The Apostles, who, without Learning or Philosophy, taught the most sublime and useful Truths more plainly than the wisest Philosophers ever had done, must derive their Knowledge from a higher Principle than they did. It is impossible for the Wit of Man to contrive any thing so admirably fitted to procure the Happiness of Mankind, as their Doctrines are; no Precepts can be more righteous and holy, no Rewards more excellent, nor Punishments more formidable, than those of the Gospel; and, which is above all, no Religion besides ever afforded, nor could all the Reason of Mankind ever have found out, such powerful Motives to the Love of God, which is the only true Principle of Obedience. Our Religion contains no dry and empty Speculations, but all its Mysteries

steries are Mysteries of Love and Mercy: Others may fear God, but it is the Christian only that can truly love him, and trust in him, and in all Conditions, in Life and in Death, look up to him, as his Father, his Saviour, and Comforter. This Religion places Men in the presence of God, and entitles them to his peculiar Favour and Care; it declares God to be their Friend and Protector here, and their everlasting Rewarder after Death; it promises and assures us of all the Happiness both in Body and Soul, that we are capable of, which is the utmost that can be expected or wished for from any Revelation, and the proper and peculiar Reason, why God should establish Religion in the World.

It appears from this whole Discourse, that nothing is wanting in the Books of the Old and New Testament, which can be expected in any Revelation. They are of the greatest Antiquity, and have been preach'd throughout the world; and have abundant Evidence both by Prophecies and Miracles, of their Divine Authority; and the Doctrine contained in them is such, as God must be supposed to reveal to Mankind, having visible Characters in it of the Divine Goodness and Holiness, and having exceedingly conduced to the Reformation of the World.

THE

THE REASONABLENESS and CERTAINTY OF THE Christian Religion.

PART III.

That there is no other Divine Revelation, but that contained in the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Teſtament.

THAT there is no other Inſtitution of Religion beſides that delivered in the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Teſtament, which has all things neceſſary to a Divine Revelation may be ſhewn in the ſeveral Particulars neceſſary to a Divine Revelation, as that no other Religion ever was of like Antiquity, or had equal Promulgation; that no other ever had ſufficient Evidence of Miracles and Prophecies in proof of it; and laſtly, that there never was any other, which did not teach many Doctrines that are unworthy of God, and contrary to the Divine Attributes, and therefore impoſſible to come from Heaven. This I ſhall prove, firſt, of the Religions of the Heathen; ſecondly, of the *Mahometan* Religion.

CHAP.

CHAP. I.

The Novelty of the Heathen Religions.

THE Novelty of the Religions amongst the Heathen, (of whom we have any certain Account from their Writings) in respect of the Scriptures, is so notorious, having been so often proved by learned Men, and is so generally acknowledg'd, that it is needless to insist much upon it. The Heathen generally were Strangers to every thing of Antiquity, and therefore must be unable to give any Proof of the Antiquity of their Religions.

The Pretences which the *Ægyptians* made to Antiquity so much beyond the times recorded in the Scriptures, proceeded from their reckoning by Lunar Years, or [a] Months; or from reckoning the Dynasties in Succession, which were contemporary. For [b] *Herodotus* mentions Twelve *Ægyptian* Kings reigning at once. But they had so different Accounts, however, of Chronology, that, as *Diodorus Siculus* says, some of them computed about thirteen thousand Years more than others, from the Original of their Dynasties, to the time of *Alexander the Great*. And the Solar Year, in use among the *Ægyptians*, who were most famous for Astronomy, was so imperfect, that they said the Sun had several times changed [c] his Course, since the Beginning of their Dynasties; imputing the Defect of their own Computation, for want of intercalary Days, to the Sun's Variation; or else affecting to speak something wonderful and extravagant. An Author, whose main Design seems

[a] Diodor. Sic. l. i. Plutarch. in Numa. Varr. apud Lactant. de Orig. Error. lib. 2. c. 12. Servius in Æneid. 3. ℣ 284.

[b] Lib. 2. cap. 151.

[c] Herod. l. 2. c. 142.

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to have been, to say all that could with any Colour of probability be said, to the Advantage both of the Learning and the Antiquity of the *Ægyptians*; found that he could give no tolerable Account of their Chronology, but by casting it into our concurrent Dynasties, and placed *Menes*, whom he supposes to be *Cham*, and who is agreed by all, to have been the first King of *Ægypt*, at the Head of each Dynasty, and inserting the Kings in Succession from him, out of *Eratosthenes* and *Manetho*, from *Eusebius* and *Syncellus*. Yet this learned and laborious Advocate of the *Ægyptians* acknowledges, that [d] 'till the DCCCCLX[th] Year of his *Ægyptian Æra*, which falls about XXX after the Death of *Joshua*, the *Ægyptian* Year consisted of CCCLX Days only; and that for this reason, they had no certainty in their Astronomy. But he observes farther, that in the Sepulchre of [e] *Osymandas* a *Theban* King, who lived in the sixteenth Century of this *Ægyptian Æra*, a Golden Cycle was found, of the thickness of one Cubit, and CCCLXV Cubits in compass, having the Days of the Year written distinctly in the several Cubits, with the Risings and Settings of the Stars, and Astrological Observations upon them. Here he says, that since the Additional Hours are not in this Cycle, it might be doubted, whether they were taken into the *Ægyptian* Year, 'till after that Age: But to this he answers, that the Risings and Settings of the Stars could not be rightly assigned without them. But how could he know that they were rightly assigned? He farther proves, that even after it was known that an Intercalation was necessary every fourth Year, yet the [f] *Ægyptian* Priests refused to use it, that their Festivals might not always fall on the same Days, but might run through the Year; and that their *Epoptæ* took an Oath, never

[d] Marsh. Chron. Can. p. 235, 237, 295.
[e] Diodor. Sic. l. 1. [f] Gemini Elementa Astronom. c. 6.

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to make any Intercalation either of Months or Days. He shews likewise from [g] *Censorinus*, that in their *Civil* as well as in their *Sacred* Year, they had no Intercalation; yet their *Natural* Year, he says, had the Intercalary Day. But to what end did this *Natural* Year serve, if it were used neither in their Sacred, nor in their Civil Affairs? It seems, that the Intercalation was not taken into the *Ægyptian* Year but was only in Notion and Idea among the Astronomers; as the Old Stile is to all purposes used among us, though our Astronomers very well understand the Defects of it. But the Case is very different with the *Ægyptians*, from what it is with us; for in the space of MCCCCLXI Years, the variation there was not of a few Days, but of a whole Year: And where there was a continual change of the Days and Months, there must needs have been great Confusion in the Calculation of Chronology. The *Ægyptians*, says the same learned [h] Author have transmitted nothing besides the Names of their Kings and their vast Pyramids, to Posterity, more ancient than *Sesostris* or *Shishack*, who sack'd *Jerusalem* in the fifth Year of *Rehoboam*'s Reign, 1 *Kings* xvi. 25. And [i] *Cassini* has found the Account of Eclipses, at the beginning of *Diogenes Laertius*, to be false; which is a farther confutation of the fabulous pretences of the *Ægyptians* to Antiquity. The earliest Astronomical Observations to be met with, which were made in *Ægypt*, are those performed by the *Greeks* of *Alexandria*, less than CCC Years before Christ, as [k] Dr. *Halley* has observed. The [l] *Chaldæans*, according to *Berosus*, supposed the Moon to be a luminous Body, and therefore could have no great skill in Astronomy; besides, they wanted Instruments to make exact Observations. [m] *Diodorus*

[g] De Die Natal. c. 18. [h] Chron. Can. p. 352.
[i] Loubere du Royaume de Siam, Tom. 2. p. 399.
[k] *Mr.* Wotton's *Reflexions upon Ancient and Modern Learning*, c. 23. [l] Vitruv. lib. ix. c. 4. [m] Lib. 11. c. 1.

Siculus writes, that the *Chaldæans* supposed the Moon's Light to be from the Sun; but he says, that they had various Opinions concerning the Sun's Eclipse, and could not determine any thing about it, nor foretel when it was to be. "All we have of them, says "the same [n] learned Astronomer, is only seven E- "clipses of the Moon, and even those but very coarse- "ly set down, and the oldest not above DCC Years "before Christ; so that after all the Fame of these "*Chaldæans*, we may be sure they had not gone far "in this Science: And tho' *Callisthenes* be said, by "*Porphyry*, to have brought from *Babylon* to *Greece* "Observations above MDCCCC Years older than "*Alexander*; yet the proper Authors making no men- "tion or use of any such, renders it justly suspected "for a Fable." This agrees with the Account that has been given of the *Chaldaick* Philosophy, by a very [o] learned and accurate Author; from whence we likewise understand, how little Credit is to be allowed to these Observations, which *Porphyry* (as he is cited by [p] *Simplicius*) says, that *Callisthenes* sent to *Aristotle* from *Babylon*; since there is nothing extant in the *Chaldaick* Astrology more ancient than the *Æra* of *Nabonassar*, which begins but DCCXLVII Years before Christ. By this *Æra*, the *Chaldæans* computed their Astronomical Observations, [q] the first of which falls about the twenty seventh Year of *Nabonassar*; and if there had been any more ancient, *Ptolemy* would not have omitted them. So little Ground is there for us to depend upon the Accounts of Time, and the vain Boasts of Antiquity which these Nations have made. The [r] *Greeks* had their Astronomy from *Babylon*; and the [s] *Athenians* had but CCCLX Days in their Year, in

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[n] *In Mr.* Wotton's *Reflexions*, ibid. [o] *Mr.* Stanley's Chaldaic, *Philos.* c. 1. [p] Simplic. ad Aristot. de Cœlo, l. 2. [q] Ptol. l. 4. c. 6. 7. [r] Herodot. l. 2. c. 109. [s] Plin. l. 34. c. 6.

the time of *Demetrius Phalereus*; yet Dr. *Halley* farther observes, "that the *Greeks* were the first practical "Astronomers, who endeavoured in earnest to make "themselves Masters of the Science; and that *Tha-* "*les* was the first who could predict an Eclipse in "*Greece*, not DC Years before Christ; and that *Hip-* "*parchus* made the first Catalogue of the fixed Stars "not above CL Years before Christ."

According to that known Observation of [t] *Varro*, there was nothing that can deserve the Name of History to be found among the *Greeks* before the *Olympiads*, which were but about twenty Years before the building of *Rome*. And [v] *Plutarch* informs us, how little the Tables of the *Olympiads* are to be relied upon. But whatever Learning or Knowledge of ancient Times the *Romans* had, they borrowed it from the *Greeks*. For they were so little capable of transmitting their own Affairs down to Posterity, with any Exactness in point of time, that for [x] some Ages, they had neither Dials nor Hour-glasses to measure their Days and Nights by for common use, and for three hundred Years they knew no such thing as Hours, or the like Distinctions; but computed their Time only from Noon to Noon. The Distinction of Time was afterwards laid aside; for in [y] the Twelve Tables, mention was made only of the Sun's *Rising* and *Setting*, 'till after some Years *Noon* was added; but they had no exact *Sun-Dial* 'till about three hundred Years after, nor any *Clepsydra* to use by Night, and in gloomy Days, 'till *A. U. C.* DXCV, *Tamdiu Populo Romano indiscreta Lux fuit.* And there was still much [z] Negligence and Abuse in their Intercalations; so that it is no wonder that their Calendar was in such Confusion 'till *Cæsar* regulated it.

[t] Censorin. de Die Natali, c. 21. [v] In Numâ, init.
[x] Censorin. ibid c. 23. [y] Plin. Hist. l. 7. c. 60.
[z] Sueton. in Jul. Cæs. c. 40. in August. c. 31.

The pretensions of the *Chineses* to Antiquity appear equally vain, and upon the same grounds: For they understood little or nothing of Astronomy, or else the Missionaties, by their skill in that Art, would not have been able so much to insinuate themselves into favour with the Emperors of *China*. Indeed, the [a] *Chineses* themselves confess, that their Antiquities are in great part fabulous, and they acknowledge that their most ancient Books were in Hieroglyphicks, which were not expounded by any who liv'd nearer than MDCC Years to the first Author of them, that the Numbers in computation are sometimes mistaken, or that Months are put for Years. But of what Antiquity or Authority soever their first Writers were, there is little or no credit to be given to the Books now remaining, since that general destruction of all ancient Books by the Emperor XI *Hoam ti*, who lived but about two hundred Years before Christ: He commanded, upon pain of Death, all the Monuments of Antiquity to be destroyed, relating either to History or Philosophy, especially the Books of *Confucius*, and killed many of their learned Men; so that from this time, they have only some fragments of old Authors left. The *Chinese* are a People vain enough to say any thing that may countenance their pretences to Antiquity, and love to magnifie themselves to the *Europæans*, which makes them endeavour to have it believed that their Antiquities are sufficiently entire, notwithstanding this destruction of their Books; and for the same reason they described the Emperor's Observatory as the most compleat, and the best fitted for the uses of Astronomy, that could be imagined; but upon the view, it appeared very inconsiderable, and the Instruments were found useless, and new ones were placed

[a] Martin. Hist. Sin. lib. i, ii. & Atl. Sinic. Præf. Phil. Couplet in Confuc. Procem. Declar. & Præf. ad Tab. Chronol. Sinicæ Monarchiæ. *Le* Compt's *Memoir.* p. 64, 71, 464.

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in their room, made by the direction of Father *Verbiest*. This people, after all their boast of Skill in Astronomy, were not able to make an exact Calendar, and their Tables of Eclipses were so uncorrect, that they could scarce foretel about what time that of the Sun should happen. In a Petition, which the Emperor of *China*, in favour, it seems, to the Missionaries, had privately drawn up to be presented by them to himself in publick, it is said, that *Father* Adam Schaal *made it known to all the Court, that the Rules of the Celestial Motions established by the ancient Astronomers of* China, *were all false*. And not only the common People of *China*, but the chief *Mandarines* are so ignorant and superstitious, that when they see the Sun or Moon under an Eclipse, with Sacrifices and other Rites, and with great noise and clamour they apply themselves to rescue them from the Dog or Dragon, which they imagine is like to devour them. The learned *Cassini* [b] says, that it is unquestionable, that a great part of the Eclipses, and of the other Conjunctions, which the *Chineses* alledge, cannot, according to their own Calendar, as it is at present, have happen'd at the Times that they pretend; as he found by the Calculation of a great number of these Eclipses and even by examining only the intervals of Time between them; some being set too near, and others at too great a distance. He observes, that F. *Couplet* himself doubts of some of these Eclipses, by reason of a Compliment which the *Chinese* Astronomers made to one of their Kings, whom they congratulated, when an Eclipse, which they had foretold did not happen, saying, that since it portended Mischief, the Heavens, in favour to him, had put it by. [c] He says, that notwithstanding their boast of ancient and magnificent Observatories furnish'd with all sorts of

[b] Regl. de L'Astron. Siam. Loubere, Tom. 2. p. 266.
[c] Reflex. sur la Chron. Chinese, ib. p. 385.

Instruments

Instruments, and their ample Colleges for the Studies of Astronomy; yet this Nation, so jealous of its own Glory, and such an Enemy to Strangers, was forced, for the Correction of their Calendar, to place the Jesuits over their own Astronomers, tho' they came to teach a Religion contrary to their own; and to do the greatest Honour to *Ricci*, *Schall*, *Verbiest*, and *Grimaldi*, who, during his absence in *Italy*, was by the Emperor of *China* chosen President of the Astronomers. From the Agreement in the Calculations of the *Chinese* Tables of Constellations, and those of *Tycho Brahe*, almost always in the same Minute, [d]*Cassini* concludes, that the *Chinese* Tables were calculated by the Jesuits, who first went into *China*. For our Astronomers of this Age find it difficult to agree in the same Minute, as to the Place of the Fixed Stars; and between the Tables of *Tycho*, and those of the Landgrave of *Hesse*, made at the same time by excellent Astronomers, there is a Difference of several Minutes; which shews, that the *Chinese* Tables were taken from *Tycho*'s, or else they could not so exactly agree with them. Besides, the Longitudes in the [e] *Chinese* Tables are set down according to *Tycho*'s Method, which reduces the Stars to the Ecliptick, and not to the Æquinoctial, as the *Chinese* Method does. This [f] excellent Astronomer, by examining a Conjunction of the Planets, under their Fifth Emperor, has discovered a difference, by the Antedate of five hundred Years between the Time noted in the *Chinese* Chronology, and the true time. And [g] he proves a Mistake of four hundred ninety seven Years in their Account of another Astronomical Observation, concerning the Winter Solstice, under their seventh Emperor. So that he has proved by one Instance, that the *Chinese* carry their Antiquities

[d] Ib. p. 390. [e] Ib. p. 391. [f] Ib. p. 396.
[g] Ib. p. 398.

too

too high by five hundred Years, and has discovered another Error in their Chronology of about five hundred Years more. M. *de la Loubere*, who, in his History of *Siam*, has communicated these Observations of *Cassini* to the World, is [h] himself of Opinion, that the *Chineses* in their List of Kings, have inserted the contemporary Kings of the Provinces of *China*, when it was divided into several lesser Kingdoms under one Monarch, as if they had reigned in Succession.

So little Credit is to be given to the Pretences, which the several Nations among the Heathens have made to Antiquity, without any ground from History, but upon wandring Discourses of Observations in Astronomy, in which they had little or no skill. It is confessed by [i] *Diodorus Siculus*, and other Heathen Writers, that *Jupiter*, and the rest of their Gods were Men who had been deified after their Death. And it has been made evident by divers learned Men, that the most ancient, and the very best of the Heathen Gods, were but Men, whom the Scriptures mention as Worshippers of the True God, such as *Noah*, *Joseph*, *Moses*, &c. * *Anatolius Alexandrinus*, in his Treatise of the *Paschal Canons*, cites the Book of *Enoch*. The [k] *Ægyptians* are said to have learned of *Abraham*, the Knowledge which they had in Astronomy. However, the *Hebrew* Calendar seems to have been fixed before *Moses*'s time: for he makes no Alteration in it, but only appoints the Month *Abib* to be the first in the Ecclesiastical Year, leaving the Civil Year as [l] he found it, in the Method probably, which was used in *Noah*'s time; or according to that, at least, by which *Moses* computes the Months

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[h] P. 399. [i] Diod. Sic. l. 3. c. 5. l. 5. c. 15.
* Apud Euseb. Hist. Eccl. lib. 7. c. 32. p. 370.
[k] Jos. Antiq. l. 1. c. 9.
[l] Τον πρωτον κοσμον διεφυλαξε. Ib. l. 1. c. 4.

of the Deluge. Burnt-offerings were appointed for the New Moons; and besides the Rules which [m] *Moses* gave them relating to their Months, Books of Astronomy were written by learned *Jews* of the Tribe of [n] *Issachar*, in the time of the Prophets: For that the care of their Calendar belong'd to that Tribe, we learn [o] from 1 *Chron.* xii. 32. And the Observation of the Feasts required to be kept by the Law of *Moses*, being fixt to set Days of certain Months, proves an Intercalation in the *Hebrew* Kalendar, which was necessary to preserve a Distinction of Seasons, and hinder that Confusion in the Worship appointed by the Law, which otherwise must have ensued. The beginning of each Month was Festival, and a Burnt-offering appointed to be offered to the Lord, which made the Jews very careful in their observation of every New Moon, *Numb.* xx. 8, 11. 1 *Sam.* xx. 5. 2 *King.* iv. 23. On the Fourteenth Day of the First Month was the Passover; Fifty Days after the Passover was the Feast of Pentecost. On the First Day of the Seventh Month was the Feast of Trumpets; in the Tenth Day of the same Month was the Attonement; and on the Fifteenth Day was the Feast of Tabernacles, *Lev*, xxiii. 5, 15, 24, 27, 34. And these Months must constantly have fallen at the same Time in the Year, because these Feasts had Relation to the Seasons, in which the Fruits of the Earth were ripened and gather'd. The Months among the *Hebrews* were not variable, as those of the *Ægyptians*, but as uncheangeable as Spring and

[m] Maim. de Consecr. Calend. & Ration. Intercalandi, c. 18.
[n] Ib. c. 17.
[o] *Ex Issacharitis erant Scientiæ Temporum periti, & docti in figendis initijs annorum atque mensium, in intercalandis quoq; mense & annis sapientes, in Novilunio inagando ad definienda hinc festa temporibus suis celebranda, exercitati quoque in cognoscenda revolutione solis fuerunt, Astrologique in signorum atque stellarum scientia præstantes.* Chal. Paraphr. in 1 Chron. xii. 32. Vid. Chald. Paraphr. in Est. i. 23.

Autumn,

Autumn, in which their stated Festivals were kept. For though the Rabbinical Jews, in this, as in other things, *transgressed the Commandment of God by their traditions*, and appointed a *second Adar* upon divers Reasons of their own, without any Warrant or Foundation from Scripture; yet the [p] *Karæi*, or *Scripturists*, still retain'd the ancient Practice, never making an Interclation upon any other account, but that the Passover might fall at the time of the Vernal *Æquinox*. But nothing conduced more to ascertain the Chronology of the Jews, than their Sabbatical Years, and their Years of Jubilee: For since every Seventh Year was a Year of *Release* of Debts contracted, and every Fiftieth Year was a Year of Restitution, (when *every Man was to return to his own possession*, Deut. xv. 1. Lev. xxv. 10.) it was necessary, that the Sabbatical Years, and the Years of Jubilee, should be express'd in their Bargains and Contracts. *According to the number of years after the Jubilee, thou shalt buy of thy neighbour. According to the multitude of years, thou shalt increase the price thereof; and according to the fewness of years, thou shalt diminish the price of it*, (Levit. xxv. 15.) which obliged them to take all imaginary Care to prevent all Mistakes and Confusion in their Computations of Time: For their Law required it, and had made every Man's Interest concerned in it. Such is the Advantage, which the True Religion has over all others, in all points of Antiquity. [q] That Rules of Astronomical Calculations were very ancient among the Jews may appear, besides what has been already said, from hence, That the *Samaritans* have Books of Astronomy in which they use the same Word with the

[p] Selden. de Ann. Civil. vet. Jud. c. 5.

[q] Scalig. Emend. Temp. lib. 2. & Bucher. de Ann. Paschal. cap. 5. p. 374.

Jews

Jews to express the *Intercalations*, tho' the *Jews* have had no Dealings with the *Samaritans*, for above two thousand Years.

CHAP. II.

Of the Defect in the Promulgation of the Heathen Religions.

THE Propagation of the several Religions profess'd among the Heathens has been very inconsiderable. For they were never extant in Books to be publickly read and examined, but their Mysteries were kept secret and concealed from the World; and all the Knowledge the People had of them, was from their Priests. Every Country had its peculiar Deities and Ways of Worship, which were seldom received or known, but in those Places where they were first set up. The [a] *Romans* rejected many foreign Religions as abominable; and none of their Religions ever prevailed, but where they had the Temporal Power to uphold them. And they lost ground daily by the Propagation of the Gospel, whilst the greatest Part of the Empire made it their business to oppress it, and to maintain the Heathen Religions against it.

None but the Teachers of the True Religion, reveal'd in the Old and New Testament, have gone about to instruct other Nations, and to propagate their Religion in strange and remote Countries. And it is to be observed, that the Christian Religion is at this Day, preach'd in all Parts of the Heathen World, and

[a] Valer. Max. de Peregrinâ Relig. rejectâ, lib. 1. c. 3. Liv. lib. 39. c. 16. Dionys. Halicarn. l. 2. Dion. Cass. l. 54. Tertul. ad Nationes, l. 1. c. 10. Apolog. c. 13. Vid. Clem. Alex. Strom. 6. fin.

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there have been still remaining many Memorials of it ever since its first Propagation, as there were of the Jewish Religion before: But where Christianity has prevailed, Heathenism has been never able to maintain its Ground; and there are hardly any but Christians (excepting some few Jews) to be found in Christian Countries; which makes a great Abatement in the Disproportion, that Heathenism in general may seem to have in its Numbers above Christianity. But if we examine the particular Religions of the Heathen, there is no Comparison; and the only thing here to be enquir'd into is, whether any particular Religion of the Heathen exceed or equal the Christian Religion in point of Promulgation; for who ever can imagine, that all, or any great number of the Heathen Religions are of Divine Revelation, must suppose God to reveal Contradictions. The Question before us is not, whether Heathens are more numerous than Christians, but whether any of their Religions has been as fully promulged as the Christian. One Herald is enough to promulge a Law to many thousands; the City of *Nineve* was converted by one Prophet; and there is, perhaps, no Nation in the World but has more Christians in it, than the first Preachers of the Gospel were.

CHAP. III.

The Defect of the Prophecies and Miracles of the Heathen Religions.

IT cannot be denied by any Man, who is not resolved to reject the Authority of all History, but that many Wonders have been done by Magicians and that many things have been foreshewn and foretold

told among Heathens, by Dreams, and Prodigies, and Oracles, which did actually come to pass: but then all that can be gather'd from hence is, that there are invisible Powers, and that Devils and wicked Spirits are able to do more than Men can do, and to know more than Men can know. The Philosophy of the *Chaldæans* and *Persians*, and other Eastern Nations, was founded upon a Belief of Spirits, and of their Influence and Concernment in the Affairs of Mankind. *Pythagoras* and *Plato* established their Philosophy upon the same Principles. And in former Ages, there was no more doubt made, whether there be Spirits, than whether there be Men in the World: for they were continually sensible of the Operations and Effects of invisible Beings, which made them exceedingly prone to Idolatry, but not inclined to Atheism. And the Case is the same now in Heathen Countries, where Apparitions and Delusions of evil Spirits, are affirm'd by all Writers to be very frequent.

But if at any time evil Spirits, by their Subtilty and Experience, and Knowledge of Affairs in the World, did foretel things which accordingly came to pass, they were things that happened not long after, and commonly such as themselves did excite and prompt Men to: Thus when the Conspiracy against *Cæsar* was come just to be put in Executon, and the Devil had his Agents concerned in it, he could foretel the Time and Place of his Death. But it had been foretold to *Pompey*, *Crassus*, and *Cæsar* himself before, as [a] *Tully* informs us from his own Knowledge, that they should all die in their Beds, and in an honourable old Age, who yet all died violent Deaths. [b] Wise and observing Men have sometimes been able to make

[a] Tull. de Divin. lib. 2.

[b] ——*facile existimari possit prudentiam quodammodo esse Divinationem; Non enim* Cicero *ea solum, quæ vivo se acciderunt, futura prædixit,* [in Ep. ad Attic.] *sed etiam quæ nunc usu veniunt, eecinit ut vates.* Corn. Nep. *in* Attic. § 16.

strange

strange Predictions concerning the State of Affairs; and therefore Spirits may be much more able to do it. Evil Spirits could foretel what they were permitted to inflict or procure: They might have foretold the Calamities of *Job*, or the Death of *Ahab* at *Ramoth-gilead*. [c] *Julian* says, that the Oracles of *Æsculapius* return'd Answers to those that consulted them; and he calls *Jupiter* to witness, that himself had often been cured by Medicines and Remedies which *Æsculapius* directed him to use; tho' [d] *Porphyry* had declared, that since *Jesus* was worshipped, *Æsculapius* and all the Gods had forsaken them, as to any Publick Help or Benefit, and their private Favours were more liable to Imposture. But this, which *Julian* says, supposing the Truth of the Fact, doth not prove that false God to have had more Skill than a Physician might have had; but only shews, that Devils may have such Knowledge of the Nature of things, as to be able to give Prescriptions in Physick. [e] And in former times, for one or two that were cured, thousands that came to *Æsculapius*'s Temple, were never the better, but rather grew worse. The false Prophets were wont to *steal the words* of the true, *Jerem.* xxiii. 30. [f] Some Oracles might possibly take their Answers from the Scriptures, as that of *Jupiter Hammon* concerning *Alexander*'s Victories, if it were not merely a piece of Flattery, which proved true by chance. Evil Spirits might likewise be able to inform Men, at a great distance, of Victories the same day they were won, as it is related [g] of several, and in particular of the Conquest of *Perseus* King of *Mace-*

[c] Apud Cyril. l. 7. p. 235. [d] Apud Euseb. Evang. Præp. l. v. c. 1. [e] Arnob. lib. 1. [f] *Dispositiones etiam Dei & nunc Prophetis concionantibus excerpunt, & nunc Lectionibus resonantibus carpunt. Ita & hinc sumentes quasdam temporum sortes, æmulantur divinitatem, dum furantur Divinationem*, Tertull. Apol. c. 22.

[g] Cic. de Nat. Deor. l. 2.

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don, by *Paulus Æmilius*, when *P. Vatienus*, to whom this was discover'd the same Day, was imprison'd, till the News of the Victory was confirm'd, and then he was rewarded with an Estate, settled upon him by the Senate. But they could not foretel things that depended upon the Choice of free Agents, and which were not to be fulfilled till many hundred Years after the Prediction; this is peculiar to God himself, who would never suffer the World to be imposed upon by Oracles of this nature, if it had been possible for the Devil to give them out. And though their Predictions of future Events did sometimes prove true, yet they very often failed; for which no reason can be given, but the want of Knowledge or Power in the evil Spirits, and the over-ruling Providence of God to disappoint and discover the Delusions. *He frustrateth the tokens of the liars, and maketh diviners mad; he turneth wise men backward, and maketh their knowledge foolish*, Isai. xliv. 25. [g] Their Gods would sometimes confess, that they foretold Events by the Stars; that they were unable to resist the Decrees of Fate; that the Temperature of the Air was the Cause why they could not always make true Predictions; and therefore they would often forewarn, that what they answered was not to be credited, and that what they declared, was by Force and Constraint. *Force me to speak no more*, says *Apollo*, *for I shall tell you lyes.* All which is prov'd by *Eusebius* and *Theodoret*, from *Porphyry*, who had made a Collection of all the Oracles, and took great pains to frame a System of Philosophy out of them. [h] *Diogenianus* appeal'd to daily Experience, and even to those, who profess'd Divination, whether the Answers returned were not commonly false; and from thence argued, that when they proved true,

[g] Euseb. Præp. l. vi. c. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. Theodoret. de Provid. Serm. 10. Tom. 4.

[h] Diogenian. apud Euseb. Præpar. l. 4. c. 2. & Theodoret. de Provid. Serm. 10. Tom. 4.

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it must be by Chance. And their most famous Oracles were glad to conceal their Meaning in so ambiguous Terms, that they wanted another Oracle to explain them; for by this means they endeavoured to avoid the being discover'd to be false. Yet this Device would not keep up their Reputation, † but most of the Sects of Philosophers had little or no Regard for them; and [i] *OEnomaus* a Cynick Philosopher, finding himself deceived by the Oracle of *Apollo*, wrote a particular Treatise to discover the Imposture of Oracles. *Demosthenes* observed, that the *Delphian* Oracle was bribed by *Philip* of *Macedon*; and divers Instances [k] of the Corruption and Subornation of Oracles, are to be found in *Herodotus*, *Plutarch*, and other Authors. In *Tully*'s time, nothing grew more contemptible than the Oracles; for, as Men became wiser, they were less regarded, and began to cease, 'till by the Power of the Gospel they were quite silenced; which put the [l] Heathen upon great Enquiries, to find out what Reason could be given why they should fail. The Cessation of Oracles was not all at once, but by degrees, as the Cessation likewise of true Prophecies and Miracles was, which were to oppose and abolish them. Their false and ambiguous Answers had brought them into Contempt before, as we learn from *Tully deDivin. l.* ii. in many Places; and upon the Revelation of the Gospel, their Power was still less, and they [m] every Day became more despicable; and then they were upheld chiefly by human Artifice and Imposture, 'till they were wholly subdu'd and decry'd: They were silenc'd in the same Proportion as Christianity prevailed, and became established in the World.

† Euseb. de Præp. l. 4. c. 2.

[i] *Cited by* Eusebius de Præpar. l. 5. c. 19, 20, *&c.*

[k] *Vid.* Van Dale de Oraculis Ethnicorum.

[l] Cic. de Divin. Plut. de Defect. Oraculorum.

[m] Τοις ἀρχαιοις μαλλον ἡν ἐν τιμῃ και ἡ Μαντικη καθολυ, και τα χρηστηρια, νυνι δε ὀλιγωρια καλιεχῳ πολλη. Strabo. l. 17.

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The Devil could not always foretel what was to come to pass, and therefore his Agents had need of their Vaults and hollow Statues, and other Artifices, to conceal their Ignorance, and help them out, when their Arts of Conjuration failed. But we have no Reason to think that the Devil, who is so industrious to promote his evil Ends, by all possible means, would omit such an Opportunity as was given him by the Opinion which the Heathens had of their Oracles. And the Trials which *Cræsus* and *Trajan* made, are sufficient to prove, that there was something Supernatural and Diabolical in them. [n] *Cræsus* sent to have many Oracles consulted at a set time, and the Question to be put to them, was, what *Cræsus* himself at that time was doing; and he resolv'd to be employ'd about the most improbable thing that could be imagin'd; for he was boiling a Tortoise, and a Lamb together in a Brass Pot: and yet the Oracle of *Delphi* discovered to the Messengers what the King was then about. [o] *Trajan*, when he was going into *Parthia*, sent a blank Paper sealed up, to an Oracle of *Assyria* for an Answer; the Oracle returned him another blank Paper, to shew that it was not so to be imposed upon. *Plutarch* [p] gives an Account of a Governor of *Cicilia*, who, for Experiment, sent a seal'd Note to the Oracle of *Mopsus*; and had so direct an Answer to it, as made him ever after reverence that Oracle. And there is no doubt to be made, but that the Emperor and that Governor would contrive their Seals as skilfully as *Lucian* could do, who says, That he had sometimes seal'd his Notes, which he sent, so carefully that all the Ways and Tricks which he mentions in his *Pseudomantis* could not open them, without his discovering it, when they were to be again return'd to him, with the Answer to

[n] Herodot. l. i. c. 47.
[o] Macrob. Saturn. l. i. c. 23.
[p] De Orac. Defectu.

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his Questions. But though things of present Concernment were discover'd, both to *Cræsus* and *Trajan*, beyond all humane Power to know, yet both were imposed upon by ambiguous Answers, when they consulted about things future, of which the Devil could not attain the knowledge.

Many [q] of the Heathen Priests themselves, upon examination, publickly confessed several of their Oracles to be Impostures, and discover'd the whole contrivance and management of the Deceit, which was entred upon Record. And in the rest, the Power of the Devil was always so limited and restrained, as to afford sufficient means to undeceive Men though many of his Predictions might come to pass. The whole [r] Mystery of Soothsaying was of no effect to those who profess'd to disregard it; which was declared by an Author never suspected of Superstition, to be a known and a very great Instance of the Divine Goodness.

[s] The presence of Christians at the Heathen Sacrifices, when they signed themselves with the sign of the Cross, in token of their Christianity, though this were unknown to the Priests that sacrificed, would hinder the *Dæmons* from making those Discoveries of the Events, by the Entrails of Beasts, which they were wont to do. [t] Every ordinary Christian could dispossess them, by his Prayers, and bare Adjurations. [v] *Apollo* declared, that the *Just upon Earth* hindred him from returning true Answers. And as the Devil

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[q] Euseb Præpar. lib. 4. c. 2. *Vid.* Theodorit. Hist. l. 5. c. 22.

[r] *In Augurum certè disciplinâ constat, neque Diras, neque ulla Auspicia pertinere ad eos, qui quamque rem ingredientes, observare se ea negaverint: quo munere divinæ indulgentiæ majus nullum est.* Plin. Hist. l. 28. c. 2.

[s] Lactant. l. 4. c. 27. de mort. Persecut. c. 10. Justin. Dial. p. 50.

[t] Ὅσα ἂν δωμαῖο προστάγειν ἀπλᾶσεις καὶ ἀνθρώπῳ· ὡς ἐπισαν γὰρ ἰδιῶ) τὸ τοιοῦτον πρᾶγμα. Origen. contra Celf l. 7.

[v] Euseb. Vit. Constant. l. 2. c. 50, 51.

was forced to declare our Saviour to be the Son of God, by the Mouths of those whom he had possess'd; so he was constrain'd to confess and commend him by his most noted Oracles, as one of the greatest Enemies of the Gospel [w] *Porphyry* himself has inform'd us. And when *Julian* the Apostate hoped to bring Oracles into Request again, *Apollo* told him, (as I have mention'd before,) That he could return no Answer to any thing which was asked him, 'till the Bones of the [x] Martyr *Babylas* were removed; and when that was done, God was pleased to suffer the Oracle of *Daphne*, and others to give out their Answers; but so notoriously false, that they exposed them as much as their Silence had done before: for when all the Oracles were consulted, to know [y] whether *Julian*, Uncle to the Apostate, should recover of his Sickness, and they all agreed that he would recover, he died while the Answers were reading that foretold his Recovery.

[z] St. *Augustine* observes, that none of the false Gods ever durst deny by any Oracle, that the God of *Israel* is the True God: And we have the Testimony of [a] *Porphyry*, that the Oracle of *Apollo* confessed him to be so. But for the Sins of Men against natural Conscience, and the Contempt of the Divine Revelations made to Mankind, and so often promulged amongst all Nations, God might permit the Devil to delude the World with such Signs and Predictions, as either were indeed true, or could not be discerned to be false, but by the Doctrines and Practices which they were brought to countenance and establish. There is no doubt, but that evil Spirits may be able to delude and impose upon Men, and to do many things

[w] Euseb. Dem. lib. 3. c. 6. Aug. de Civ. Dei, l. 19, 23.
[x] Soz. l. 5. c. 19. Chrys. de S. Babyl.
[y] Philostorg. lib. 7. c. 12.
[z] Aug. de Divin. Dæm. c. 8. De Consens. Evang. l. 1. c. 18, 32.
[a] Porphyr. apud Euseb. Evang. Præpar. l. 9. c. 10.

by their Sagacity and Cunning, which may be above the Power of Man not only to perform, but to understand or find out: but their Miracles were never wrought to confirm any sound and useful Doctrine; nor had they been plainly foretold by ancient Prophecies, as the Miracles of our Saviour and his Apostles had been: And the Power by which our Religion was attested aud established, was so much superior to any Power in the Heathen Gods, that when they were adjured by Christians, they were forced to confess themselves to be wicked and seducing Spirits; as the Primitive Christians declare in their Writings, and appeal to the Heathens of their own times for the Truth of it, and undertake, upon pain of Death, to prove it before them. This [b] *Tertullian* undertakes, in his Apology, (as I have before observed) addressed to the Emperor and Senate of *Rome*, or at least to the Proconsul of *Africk*, and the Governors of the several Cities and Provinces, written in *Latin*, and [c] translated into *Greek*. And St. *Cyprian* affirms the like, in his Treatise to *Demetrianus* a Judge of *Carthage*, or, as some think, the Pro-consul: To the same purpose likewise speak *Origen*, *Minucius Felix*, and others of the Primitive Christians. And we cannot imagine, that Men of common Sense would ever have made such publick and repeated Appeals, if their Pretences had been false, to the hazard of their own Lives, and the utter Disgrace and Extirpation of their Religion, for which they endeavoured to plead, by such confident and bold Discourses, so easie to be disproved, if they had not been true. Men, who have the Wealth and Power of the World on their side, may perhaps

[b] *Educatur hic aliquis sub Tribunalibus vestris, quem Dæmone agi constet, jussus à quolibet Christiano loqui Spiritus ille, tam se Dæmonem confitebitur de vero, quam alibi Deum de falso.* Tertull. Apol. c. 23. [c] Euseb. Hist. lib. 2. c. 2.

sometimes make large boasts and high pretences, when they can easily hinder others from bringing them to the Test; but Men that had all the power and policy of the Empire against them, would never have offer'd any thing of this nature in defence of their Religion, unless they had been able to make it good to the faces of their worst Enemies, to whom their Apologies were directed.

CHAP. IV.

The Defect in point of Doctrine in the Heathen Religions.

IT is undeniable, that the Doctrines of all the Heathen Religions have been wicked, and contrary to the Unity and Goodness, and Purity of God, and to the Virtue and Happiness of Mankind. This might be made out at large by Particulars, as,

1. The Theology of the Heathens was so confused and absurd, that the only Evasion which the Philosophers could find, who undertook the defence of Paganism against Christianity, was to expound their Theology by Allegories; but this [a] *Philo Byblius* censures as absurd, and maintains that it was a mere abuse and innovation in their Divinity; in proof of which, he alledges the Authority of *Sanchoniatho*; and *Eusebius* besides makes good the charge. [b] *Zeno* first begun this way of Allegorizing, in which he was followed by *Cleanthes*, *Chrysippus*, and other Stoicks. [c] *Plu-*

[a] Euseb. Præpar. l. i. c. 9, 10.

[b] *Magnam molestiam suscepit & minimè necessariam primus Zeno, post Cleanthes, deinde Chrysippus, commentitiarum fabularum reddere rationem.* Cic. de Nat. Deor lib. 3.

[c] Plut. Quomodo juven. audiend. sint Poëm.

tarch

tarch says, that *Cleanthes* seem'd to be in jest, in some of his interpretations, and that those of *Chrysippus* were strangely forc'd; and he gives Instances of both kinds. But this pretence to Allegories is by none more fully confuted, than by [d] *Arnobius*. It is well observed [e] by *Dionysius Halicarnasseus*, that those Expositions were known to very few; but that the People understood the Fables of their Theology in the grossest sense, and either despised all Religion, or encouraged themselves in Wickedness, by the Example of their Gods.

The [f] *Chaldæans* had twelve principal Deities, according to the number of Months in the Year. And [g] *Zoroaster* taught Men to Sacrifice to *Arimanius* the *Dæmon*, or Evil Being, as well as to God, or the good Being, whom he styled *Oromazes*. [h] *Varro* makes three sorts of Heathen Theology; the Fabulous invented by the Poets; the Physical, or that of the Philosophers; and the Civil or Popular, being such as the several Cities and Countries had set up. The [i] *Greek* Theology was thus distinguished: 1. God who rules over all. 2. The Gods, who were supposed to govern above the Moon. 3. The *Dæmons*, whose Jurisdiction was in the Air below it. And, 4. The Heroes or Souls of dead Men, who were imagined to preside over Terrestial Affairs. And besides all these, the evil *Dæmons* were worshipped, out of fear of mischief from them, which gives some account of the prodigious multitudes of their Gods; whereof [k] *Hesiod* computes thirty thousand hovering about the Earth in the Air, (unless he be to be understood of an indefinite number.) [l] *Orpheus* reckon'd but three hundred sixty

[d] Adverss. Gent. lib. 5. [e] Dion. Hist. lib. 2.
[f] Diod. Sic l. 1. [g] Plut. de Isid. & Osir.
[h] Tertull. ad Nat. lib. 2. c. 1. Aug. Civ. Dei, lib. 6. c. 5.
[i] Eusеb. Præpar. l. 4. c. 5. [k] Hesiod. Oper. & Dier. lib. 1. ℣ 250. [l] Theoph. ad Autol. lib. 3.

five; and at his Death, in his Will, asserted only one. [m] *Varro* reckon'd up three hundred *Jupiters*; and the † Gods of *Mexico* (as the *Indians* reported to the *Spaniards*) were two thousand in number. *Varro*, *Tully*, and *Seneca*, and the most sober and discreet Men, were ashamed of the Heathen Gods, and believed that there is but one God; to which purpose, the Verses of [n] *Valerius Soranus* are produced and expounded by *Varro*. *Theophilus* Bishop of *Alexandria* ordered one Image of *Serapis* to be preserved, when all the other Idols were demolished, that the Gentiles might not be able to deny, that they had worshipped such Gods. At which *Æmonius* the Grammarian, a Heathen Priest [p], who was Master of *Socrates* the Ecclesiastical Historian, was much concerned; saying, It was hard, that their Religion should be exposed by the preserving of that one Statue, when the rest were destroyed.

The Worship of their Gods, and of their Images or Idols, was so gross among the ancient Heathen, and is to this Day in *China*, and both in the *Indies*, that one would almost think it impossible for Men to be so far deluded by the Devil: They worshipped not only the Ghosts of dead Men, but Birds and Beasts, and creeping Things, and the Devil himself under Images of such hideous Forms and Shapes as are frightful to look upon. The [q] wiser Heathens were ashamed of these Idolatries; and [r] *Varro* particularly commends the *Jews* for using no Images in their divine Worship, which, he says, were not in use at *Rome* [s] till above one hundred and seventy Years after the Foundation of the City; for [s] *Numa*, the Contriver

[m] Tertul. Apol. c. 14. † Gage's *Survey of the* West-Indies, c. 12.
[n] Aug. de Civ. Dei, lib. iv. c. 31, vii 9.
[o] Socrat. Hist. l. 1. c. 16.
[p] Πιθηκε ἱερόδουλος, The Priest of an Ape.
[q] *Gentes verò quædam Animalia etiam, aliquæ & obscœna pro Diis habent, ac multa dictis magis pudenda, per fœtidos cibos & alia similia jurantes.* Plin. Hist. l. 2. c. 7.
[r] Aug. Civ. Dei, lib. 4. c. 31. [s] Plut. in Vit. Numæ.

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of their Religion, forbad Images: Which makes it the most strange, that the[t] *Romans* should afterwards reerect Temples and Altars to the most unlikely things, to a *Fever*, and to *ill Fortune*, to * *Paleness* and *Fear*. as the *Athenians* did to *Contumely* and *Impudence:* But it is still more amazing, that they should, by the Decrees of the Senate, deify the worst of Men, the very Monsters and Reproaches of Mankind: And whilst the Christians suffer'd for refusing Adoration to their Emperors, they had divine Honours paid them by the gravest Heathens, such as [v] *Quinctilian*, not only through Fear of Death, but of Complement and base Flattery.

2. All manner of Debauchery and Lewdness made up so great a part of the Heathen Religion, that it is too shameful and too notorious to relate. The *Romans* [w] sometimes rejected foreign Deities; and when they received the Gods of other Nations, they did not worship them after their manner; and yet the Rites of the *Romans* themselves, in the Worship of *Cybele*, *Flora*, *Bacchus*, &c. were very scandalous and wicked. And all their Sports and Spectacles (which had nothing surely in them that could be proper for divine Worship) were invented and performed in honour of their Gods, [x] and had the Presence of the *Pontifex*

[t] Cic. de Nat. Deor. lib. 3. De Legib. lib. 2. Valer. Max. l. 2. c. 1. Plin. Hist. lib. 2. c. 7.

* Liv. l. 1. c. 26.

[v] Quint. Institut. lib. 4. Procem.

[w] Tertull. Apol. c. 6. Liv. Decad. 4. l. 9. Euseb. Præpar. lib. 2. c. ult. ex Dionys. Halicarnas. lib. 2.

[x] *Ludi verò, quos facitis, quibus Floralibus & Megalensibus nomen est, cæterique omnes alii, quos esse sacros voluistis, & Religionum inter officia deputari; quam rationem habent, quam Causam; ut instituti condique debuerint, & ex Numinum appellatione signai?* Arnob. lib. 7. p. 281. *Sedent & in spectaculis publicis sacerdotum omnium magistratuumque collegia, Pontifices Maximi, & Maximi Curiones: Sedent XV, viri laureati, & Diales cum apicibus Flamines: Sedent. Augures interpretes divinæ mentis & voluntatis: Necnon & castæ virgines, perpetui nutrices & conservatrices ignis, sedet cunctus Populus & Senatus,* &c. Id. lib. 4. sub fin. Vid. Sueton. in August. c. 33.

Maximus, and of the other Priests and chief Magistrates to celebrate them; whence *Quinctilian* [y] says, the Theatre might be styled a kind of Temple. It was a custom to [z] perform Funeral Rites to the Dead, by killing Men at their Sepulchres; and for this reason, Captives were wont to be slain at the Funeral of a General, 'till at last the Gladiators, call'd *Bustuarij*, were appointed instead of them. [a] Another account of the original of Gladiators, is from an ancient custom, for Men to devote themselves to Death, to appease the Wrath of some Deity towards their Country. But this was a sort of Devotion, which was more especially paid to [b] *Saturn*, whose Image was placed in a Cavity contrived under-ground to receive the Blood of the slain. And as [c] some of their Gods delighted in Punishments and Blood, so others were supposed to be pleased with Sports.

3. But besides their bloody Spectacles, where Men were exposed to be killed by Beasts, or by one another, their Altars themselves were not free from humane Blood: For the barbarous Cruelty of the Religions amongst the Heathen was such, that they were obliged to offer up innocent Men and Children in Sacrifice to their Deities. Some of the Rabbins have been of opinion that *Jeptha* sacrificed his Daughter,

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y Quintil. Institut, lib. 3. c. 8.

z Serv. ad Virg. Æn. 10.

a Capitolin. Vit. Max. & Albin.

Ἐν ἀκμαις δε ὑσης ἐτι της Ἑλληνικης δεισιδαιμονιας, ἀμιλλαι μονομαχιας ἐπελελυντο παρα Ῥωμαιοις μελακαιρες. κεκρυπτο δετις ὑπο γην κρυπτ, λιθοις τετρημοις ὑπεκχηνω, ἱνα τω τε θεισοντ κατα-μιαινοιτο λυθρω. Cyril. Alexand. contra Julian. lib. 4. p. 128. Edit. Lipsi. Vid. Prudent. Hymn. in S. Romanum. p. 141.

c *Labeo numina mala victimis cruentis atque hujusmodi supplicationibus placari existimat: bona vero ludis & talibus, quasi ad Lætitiam pertinentibus rebus.* Aug. Civ. Dei, lib. 8. c. 13.

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but others deny it, [d] and all are agreed, that if he did sacrifice her, he sinned in doing it: and we know, that *Abraham* was hindred by a Miracle and a Voice from Heaven, when he was about to slay *Isaac*. But the chief Oracles among the Heathen, appointed humane Sacrifices, that of [e] *Delphi*, that of [f] *Dodona*, and of [g] *Jupiter Saotes*. * The *Romans* were induced to offer their Sacrifices, by consulting the *Sybilline* Books. † It was the Custom of all the Greeks, to sacrifice a Man, before they went out to war. It was a Custom among the [h] *Phœnicians* and *Canaanites*, for their Kings, in times of great Calamity, to sacrifice one of their Sons, whom they loved best; and it was common both with them, and the *Moabites*, and *Ammonites*, to sacrifice their Children. The *Ægyptians*, the *Athenians* and *Lacedæmonians*, and generally all the *Grecians*; the *Romans* and *Carthaginians*, the *Germans* and *Gauls* and *Britains*, and in brief, all the Heathen Nations throughout the World offered humane Sacrifices upon their Altars; and this not on certain Emergencies, and in imminent Dangers only, but constantly, and in some places every day; but upon extraordinary Accidents, multitudes were sacrificed at once to their bloody Deities; as [i] *Diodorus Siculus* and others relate, that in *Africk*

[d] *Utcunque autem se res ea habuerit id certum puto esse, non reperiri apud Magistros, qui ex jure aliquo immolandam eam esse affirmaverit.* Selden. *de Jure Nat. & Gent.* lib. iv. c. 2. The Daughters of Israel went yearly to lament, *or to talk with her, as it is in the Margin* Judg. xi. 40. *The word is translated* rehearse, *or* speak, *Judg.* v. 11.

[e] Pausan. Messen. & Bœot. Euseb. Præpar. Evang. l. 5. c. 19.

[f] Id. Achaic. [g] Id. Bœot.

* *Ex fatalibus libris sacrificia aliquot extraordinaria facta, inter quæ Gallus & Galla, Græcus & Græca in foro Boario sub terra vivi demissi sunt in locum saxo conseptum, ibi ante hostiis humanis minimè Romano sacro imbutum.* Liv. lib. 22. c. 57. Plut. Quæst. Rom. Διὰ τι τὰς καλλιεναὰς Βλετονηστιὰς, &c.

† Euseb. de laudib. Constantini. c. 13.

[h] Grot. ad Deut. xviii. 10.

[i] Diod. Sic. l. 20. Lactant. lib. 1. c. 21. ex Piscennio Festo.

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Two hundred Children of the principal Nobility were sacrified to *Saturn* at one time. And [k] *Aristomenes* sacrificed Three hundred Men together to *Jupiter Ithometes*, one of whom was *Theopompus*, King of the *Lacedæmonians*. And the same Custom is found practised amongst the Idolatrous *Indians*, of offering whole Hecatombs of humane Sacrifices to their false Gods. [l] In *Peru*, when their new *Incha* was crown'd, they sacrificed two hundred Children from four to ten Years of Age: And the Son was wont to be sacrific'd for the Life of the Father, when he was in Danger of Death. Sometimes the *Mexicans* have sacrific'd above five thousand of their Captives in a Day, and in divers places above twenty thousand, as *Acosta* writes out of the Informations he had from the *Indians*. [m] *Livy* makes mention of humane Sacrifices at *Rome*. [n] *Dion Cassius* relates, that Two Men were sacrificed in the *Campus Martius*, under *Julius Cæsar*. He [o] says, it was a Custom begun under *Augustus*, for Men to be *devoted* to Death for the Safety of the Emperor. From [p] ancient times, it had been customary among the People of *Italy*, in case of great Danger, to make a solemn Vow, that whatever should be brought forth in the following Spring, should be sacrificed; and *Apollo* being consulted, what was to be done in order to be freed from the Pestilence, answer'd, That the Vow had not been performed in Sacrificing Children; but it should suffice, if those who would have been kill'd, were now banished. This is the Meaning of *Ver Sacrum*, which is mention'd in *Livy*. And nothing less than Banishment would be accepted by the Gods, instead of the Death

[k] Euseb. Præpar. lib. 4. c. 16. Macrob. Saturn. lib. 1. c. 7. Alex. ab Alexand. lib. vi. c. ult.

[l] Jos. Acost. Hist. l. 5. c. 19, 21. [m] Liv. l. xxii. c. 57.

[n] Dion. Cass. l. 43. [o] Lib. 53. [p] Festus in Martin. & in Ver. Sacr.

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of such Children, as were then born. [q] *Suetonius* mentions, that some Writers affirmed, that *Augustus* offer'd a great number of Enemies, who had surrender'd themselves, to be slain on the Ides of *March*, in *Devotion to the Manes of Julius Cæsar.* We are inform'd by [r] *Pliny*, that, *A. U. C.* DCLVIII. a Decree of the Senate passed, that no Man should be sacrificed, and that till then such Sacrifices were publick. This Prohibition seems to concern only the common and frequent use of them: for besides what has been already observ'd, [s] *Plutarch* says, they continued in his time; and it was not till about the time of *Constantine*'s Reign, that a final Stop was put to so strange and abominable a Practice, for tho' it was forbidden by *Adrian*, and very much abated in his Reign; yet [t] *Antinous* was made a Sacrifice by *Adrian* himself. [u] *Tatian* declares, that the human Sacrifices offer'd to *Jupiter* at *Rome*, and to *Diana* not far from thence, were one chief Cause of his leaving the Heathen Religion, and becoming a Christian. [x] *Pliny* acquaints us, that they were practis'd in the Age in which he liv'd; and *Minucius Felix*, that they were used, when he wrote. [y] *Porphyry* mentions them as notoriously practis'd at *Rome* in his time; and [z] *Lactantius* speaks of them as not laid aside in his. Notwithstanding this Usage is so much against humane Nature, as well as contrary to the Divine Mercy and Goodness, yet it made up so great a Part of the Heathen Religion, and was become so customary, that it was hard to bring Men off from it; which at the same time demonstrates both how false such Religions

[q] In Aug. c. 15. [r] Nat. Hist. l. 30. c. 1. § 3.
[s] Plutarch. in Marcello, initio.
[t] Ἔτι καὶ ἱερᾶς ἤθεις, ὡς ἡ ἀληθεια ἔχει, Dion. Cass. l. 69.
[u] Orat. adv. Gentes. [x] Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 28. c 2.
[y] Ἀλλ' ἐστι καὶ νυν τις ἀνοια κὴ την μεγαλην πολιν τῆ τῶ Λατιαρεως Διος εορτῆ σφαζομενον ἀνθρωπον. Porph. de Abstin. l. 2. c. 56.
[z] Lact. l. 1. c. 21. Et Latio in hodiernum *Jovi* media in Urbe humanus sanguis inguratur. Tertul. Scorpiaç. c. 7. p. 828.

were,

were, and that Men had a most undoubted Experience of invisible Powers; or else in so many Nations both the Kings and People would never have sacrific'd their own Children to their false Gods, to avert the Evils which they were threatned withal. But what Sins could the Death of these Innocents be design'd to expiate, when the very Acts of their Religion consisted in the Commission of Wickedness? Or what Reward in another World, for a Life lost in this, could be expected from a Religion, which placed all Happiness in the Enjoyment of the Pleasures and Vices of this World? Must the Sins against *Venus* or *Flora*, against *Bacchus* or *Mercury*, be expiated by the Death of innocent Children? Or could any Reward in another Life be expected from such Deities, when Innocence and Virtue are the things, which give them the most Offence, and nothing can delight them so much, as the Sin and Misery of Mankind; *Julian* used all imaginable Arts to restore the Heathen Worship, and to recommend it to the World, by reducing it to such a System, as that it might neither be exposed to the Contempt, nor raise the Horror of Mankind. But[a] Discoveries were, after his Death, made by the Remains of Bodies found both at *Carrhæ* where he kept his Court, in his *Persian* Expedition, and in his Palace at *Antioch*, that he had offered Humane Sacrifices. So inseparable were such Sacrifices from the Religion of the Heathen.

The Persons that introduced the Heathen Religions, were either Men of Design, who established themselves in their Power and Authority by it, as *Numa*; or Men of Fancy and Fiction, as the Poets, whom *Plato* would have banished out of his Commonwealth. And the Gods of the Heathen, who must be supposed to reveal these Mysteries and Ways

[a] Greg. Nazianz. Invect. 1. p. 54. Invect. 2. Schol. p. 91. Edit. Eton. Theodorit. Hist. lib. 3. c. 26, 27. Vid. Socr. l. 3. c. 14.

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of Worship, were always more wicked than their Votaries, whose greatest Immoralities consisted in the Worship of them; the gross Enormities not only of *Venus* and *Bacchus*, but of *Saturn* and *Jupiter*, are too well known to need any particular Relation.

When the [b] *Athenians* consulted *Apollo Pythius*, what Religious Worship they should establish, the Oracle answer'd; *That, to which their Ancestors had been accustomed*; and when, since their Ancestors had often changed their Ways of Worship, they came again to enquire, which of their Customs was to be followed: he answered, *The best*. Which was in effect to give no Answer at all; for their Desire was to know, which was to be settled as the best. But what could be best, when all was so bad? There was no Body of Laws, or Rules of good Life, proposed by their Oracles; but on the contrary, they were in Commendation of lascivious Poets, or they flatter'd Tyrants, or they appointed [c] Divine Worship to be paid to such as won the Mastery at the *Olympick* Games, or to inanimate things; or they promoted some other ill, or vain and unprofitable Design, as *Oenomaüs* the Philosopher observ'd, and proved by particular Instances recited out of him by [d] *Eusebius*. The Laws of [e] *Lycurgus* were approv'd of, and confirmed by the *Delphick* Oracle, and yet Theft, and a Community of Wives, and the Murther of Infants, was allowed by these Laws. And the same [f] Oracle not only ordered Divine Honours

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[b] Cic. de Legibus. l. 2. § 40.

[c] *Consecratus est vivus sentiensque Oraculi ejusdem (Delphici) jussu & Jovis Deorum summi astipulatu, Euthymus Pycta, semper Olympiæ victor & semel victus,* ——— *quod & vivo facilitatum & mortuo* [sacrificia oblata] *nihilque adeo mirum aliud, quàm hoc placuisse Diis.* Plin. Hist. l. 7. c. 47.

[d] Euseb. Præpar. lib. 5. c. 34, 35.

[e] Plutarch. in Lycurg.

[f] Arrian. de Expedit. Alex. l. 4.

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to be paid to *Hercules* and [g] *Alexander*, but appointed [h] *Cleomedes* a Madman and a Murtherer, to be worshipp'd with Sacrifice. [i] *Prophyry* prov'd, from Oracles, that Magick was the Gift of the Gods. And I have already observ'd, that they commanded Humane Sacrifices. This is enough to shew, that the Heathen Religions could not be from God, since they taught the Worship of Idols and of Devils; and the Mysteries and Rites of them were utterly inconsistent with the Goodness and Purity of Almighty God. And whoever doth but look into the Religions at this Day amongst the Idolatrous *Indians*, by their ridiculous and cruel Penances, and other Superstitions (besides the sacrificing of Men, and sometimes of themselves, as the Women who offer themselves to be burnt with the Bodies of their dead Husbands, and the like) will soon be convinced that they cannot be of God's Institution. The *Chineses* themselves, who have so great a Reputation for Wisdom, are like the rest, both in their Idolatries, and in many of their Opinions and Practices.

It is evident therefore, that none of the Heathen Religions can make any probable Claim to Divine Revelation, having none of the Requisites to such a Revelation, and being but of a late Original, not far divulg'd, supported neither by Prophecies nor Miracles from God, and containing Doctrines that are idolatrous, impure, cruel, and every way wicked and absurd.

[g] Socrat. Hist. l. 3. c. 23.
[h] Pausan. Eliac.
[i] Apud Euseb. Præp. Evang. l vi. c. 4.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

Of the Philosophy of the Heathen.

BUT besides the Religions of the Heathens, divers of the Philosophers pretended to something supernatural, as *Pythagoras*, *Socrates*, and some others; and therefore it will be proper here to examine likewise the Justice of their Pretensions. And indeed, whatever the Original of the Heathen Philosophy were, whether from their Gods, or from themselves, if the Precepts of Philosophy amongst the Heathens were a sufficient Rule of good Life, there may seem to have been little or no necessity for a Divine Revelation. But I shall prove, 1. That the Heathen Philosophy was very defective and erroneous. 2. That whatever was excellent in it, was owing to the Revelations contain'd in the Scriptures. 3. That if it had been as excellent, and as certain, as it can be pretended to be, yet there had been great need of a Divine Revelation.

I. The Heathen Philosophy was very defective and erroneous. It was *defective* in point of Authority. *Socrates*, though he would be thought to be inspired, or supernaturally assisted, gave Men only his own Word for it. *Pythagoras* indeed pretended both to Prophecies and Miracles, but he was a great Magician, in the opinion of [a] *Xenophon*, [b] *Pliny*, and *Plutarch*, and therefore whatever he did or foretold, must be ascribed to that Power, which, as it has been before declared, the Devils may have, to do strange things, and to know things done at a distance, or some time after; and his Predictions and Miracles (even as they are related by *Porphyry* and *Jamblicus*)

[a] Xenoph. Epist. ad Æschinem. Plutarch. in Numâ.
[b] Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 30. c. 1. § 2.

were

were such as that a bare Recital of them were enough to confute any Authority, which could be claimed by them. His Impostures may be seen in *Diogenes Laërtius*. [c] *Pliny* writes, that not only *Pythagoras*, but *Empedocles*, *Democritus*, and *Plato* himself, made long Voyages to learn Magick. [d] *Aristotle* says, *Epimenides* foretold nothing, whatever others relate of him. And as the Philosophers had no *Divine* Authority for what they delivered, so their *own* was but of small Account; they were generally rather Men of Wit and Humour, than of sound Doctrine or good Morals. And whoever reads the Lives of the Philosophers, written by *Diogenes Laertius*, and the Lives of the *Cæsars* by *Suetonius*, would believe the World might have been as soon reform'd by the one sort of Men as by the other. As to the Philosophers, who, after the Christian Religion appear'd in the World, pretended to Miracles, it is a hard matter to think the Writers of their Lives in earnest, when they relate them; For a Man may as well believe the Fables of *Æsop* or *Lucian*, to be true History, as the Stories in the Life of *Apollonius Tyanæus* written by *Philostratus*, or those in the Life of *Isidorus* written by *Damascius*, an Abstract whereof we have left preserved [e] in *Photius*.

The Heathen Philosophy was defective likewise in point of Antiquity and Promulgation. Philosophy, as far as we have any Account of it, was but a late thing; so it is styled in *Tully*, [f] *neque ante philosophiam patefactam, quæ nuper inventa est.* [g] *Seneca* computes the Rise of it to be less than a thousand Years before his own time: about that distance of time [h] *Pliny* places

[c] Plin Hist. l. 30. c § 2. [d] Arist. Rhet. l. 3. c. 17.
[e] Phot. Cod. ccxlii. [f] Tul. de Divin. l. 1.
[g] Apud Lactant. l. 3.
[h] Plin. Hist. l. 7. c. 16. l. 25. c. 7. Cùm Artes omnes dicantur in Græciâ intra mille annorum tempora repertæ, &c. Var. de Re Rust. l. 3. c. 1.

Homer

Homer, whom he styles the first Parent of all Learning and Antiquity. But the moral and useful Part of Philosophy, consider'd as a Science, had no ancienter Original than *Socrates*. Before, it lay in loose and incoherent Sayings, such as those of *Solon* and *Thales*, and the rest of the Seven Wise Men, who liv'd but in the time of *Cyrus*. Philosophy of all kinds, has always been a matter of Learning, and confined to learned Men: There never was any one Nation of *Pythagoræans*, or *Platonists*, or *Stoicks*, or *Aristotelians*; the greatest part of the Nations of the World, never heard so much as of the Names of the most celebrated Philosophers, and know nothing at all of their Doctrine.

That Philosophy was defective in its Doctrines is notorious: For, as *Lactantius* observes, the very Name of Philosophy (invented by *Pythagoras*, who yet would be thought to have had some supernatural Assistance) implies a Confession of Ignorance, or Imperfection of their Knowledge, and a Profession only to search after Wisdom. And [i] *Pythagoras* gave this very reason why he styled himself a Philosopher, because no Man can be Wise but God only; and yet this vain Man sometimes pretended himself to be a God. *Socrates* was the first of all the Philosophers that apply'd himself to the Study of Morality; and [k] he, who first undertook to render Philosophy useful and beneficial to Mankind, profes's'd to know nothing at all certainly, but to disprove the Errors of others, not to establish or discover Truth: In which he was followed by *Plato*; and before him, [l] *Democritus*, *Anaxagoras*, *Empedocles*, and almost all the ancient Philosophers, agreed in this, though they agreed in few things else, that they could attain to no

[i] Diog. Laërt. in Pythag. Jamblich. vit. Pythag.
[k] Tull. Acad. Q. lib. i.
[l] Vid. Diog. Laërt. in Pyrrhon.

certain Knowledge of things. So that, as *Tully* says, *Arcesilas* was not the Founder of a new Academy, or Sect of Philosophers, who professed to doubt of all things; for he taught no more than what the ancient Philosophers had generally taught before him, unless it were that *Socrates* profess'd to know his own Ignorance of things, but *Arcesilas* would not own himself certain of so much as that. Indeed, the Notions of Philosophy were so little convincing, even in the plainest Matters, that many of the greatest Wits took up in Scepticism, or little better. No Man had studied all the Hypotheses of Philosophy more, or understood them better, or had better explained them than *Tully*; and yet at last all concluded in Uncertainty, as he often professes: the like may be said of *Varro*, *Cotta*, and others. It would be endless to insist upon the contrary Notions of their Philosophers; *Justin Martyr* and others of the Fathers shew at large the very different and contrary Opinions of the principal of them, not only in things of less Moment, but in the Doctrines of Religion and Morality: Whereas the Writers of the Old Testament are both of greater Antiquity than the Philosophers, and of so entire agreement among themselves, [m] that they all speak the same things, and teach the same Doctrines, tho' living in different Ages and Countries; because they were but the Instruments and Ministers in declaring the Divine Truth. God is the Author, who inspired them in all they wrote; and therefore the Creation of the World, the Formation of Man, the Immortality of the Soul, and a future Judgment, with whatever else is necessary to be known, are delivered by them in such a manner, as if all had been utter'd by the same Mouth.

The Doctrine of Philosophy concerning God and Providence, and a future State, was very imperfect

[m] Just. Martyr. Cohort. ad Græc.

and uncertain, as *Socrates* himself declared just before his Death: but what could be certain to him, that profess'd to doubt of every thing? The [n] Errors of the Philosophers concerning Providence, are discovered and confuted by *Nemesius*, in an admirable Discourse upon that Subject. [o] *Varro* computed near three hundred Opinions concerning the *Summum Bonum*; they were so far from being able to give any certain Rules and Directions for the Government of our Lives, that they could by no means agree in what the chief Happiness of Man consists, or what the Aim and Design of our Actions ought to be. *Plato* taught the Lawfulness and Expediency of Mens having their Wives in common; and both *Socrates* and *Cato* must hold a Community of Wives lawful, as we learn from their Practice: for they lent out their Wives to others, as if it had been a very generous and friendly Act, and the very height and perfection of their Philosophy. It was a Practice both among the [p] *Greeks* and *Romans*, to part with their Wives to other Men; though *Mercer* thinks the *Romans* were divorced from their Wives before others took them; because *Cato* is blamed for taking his Wife again after the Death of *Hortensius*, without the Solemnity of a new Marriage. Fornication was so far from being disallowed by the Heathen, that it was rather recommended as a Remedy against Adulteries by [q] *Cato* himself, [r] whose Intemperance in Drinking was likewise notorious: *Pliny* represents it as his greatest Praise, that Men retained their regard and reverence for him, even when they found him in Drink. Many of the Philosophers

[n] Nemes. de Nat Hom. c. 44.
[o] Aug. de Civ. l. xix. c. 1.
[p] Demosth. pro Phormione. Strabo, l. xi. Alex. ab Alex. l. i. c. 24.
[q] Horat. Serm. l. i. Sat. 2. Cic. pro M. Cœlio.
[r] Plin. lib. iii. Ep. 12.

held Self-murther lawful, and did themselves set an Example of it to their Followers. The exposing of Children to be starved, or otherwise destroyed, was practised amongst the most civilized Heathen Nations; and it being foretold some time before the Birth of *Augustus*, that a King of the *Romans* would be born that Year, the Senate made a Decree, [s] *Nequis illo anno genitus educaretur.* [t] *Plutarch* himself says, that he could find nothing unjust or dishoneſt in the Laws of *Lycurgus*, though Theft, Community of Wives, and the murthering such Infants as they saw weak and sickly, and therefore thought they would prove unfit to serve the Common-wealth, were a part of those Laws.

This was [v] one of the Precepts of those who were honoured with the Title of the Seven Wise Men of *Greece*, *Be kind to your Friends, and revenge yourself upon your Enemies.* Revenge was esteemed not only lawful, but honourable; and a Desire of Popular Fame and Vain Glory were reckon'd among the Virtues of the Heathen, and were the greatest Motive and Encitement they had to any other Virtue. [x] *Plutarch* tells us of *Aristides*, so famed for Justice, that tho' he were strictly just in private Affairs, yet in things of publick Concernment he made no scruple to act according as the present Condition of the Commonwealth seemed to require. For it was his Maxim, that in such cases Justice must give way to Expediency; and he gives an Instance, how *Aristides* advised the *Athenians* to act contrary to their most solemn Contract and Oath, imprecating upon himself the Punishment of the Perjury, to avert it from the Commonwealth. *Tully*, in the Third Book of his Offices, where he treats of the strictest Rules of Justice, and proposes so many admirable Examples of

[s] Sueton. August. c. 94. [t] Plutarch. in Lycurg.
[v] Sosiad. apud Stobæum. Serm. 3. [x] Plut. in Aristide.

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it, yet resolves the Notion of Justice only into a Principle of Honour; upon which he concludes, that no Man should do a dishonest Action, though he could conceal it both from God and Men; and determines, that an Oath is but an Appeal to a Man's own Mind or Conscience. *Cùm verò jurato dicenda sententia sit, meminerit Deum se adhibere testem, id est, (ut arbitror) mentem suam, quâ nihil homini dedit ipse Deus divinius.*

The *Indians* themselves, whatever may be thought to the contrary, have naturally as good Sense and Parts as other People: which [y] *Acosta* sets himself to prove in divers Instances: but they had less Communication with those who retained Revealed Religion: and by their own Vices and the Subtilty of the Devil, the Notions, which they had received from it, were lost or perverted.

The *Ægyptians*, who were so famous for their Learning, are a great Instance how poor a thing humane Reason is without the Assistance of Divine Revelation: For all their profound Learning did but lead them to the grossest Idolatry, whilst they conceived God to be only an *Anima Mundi*, and therefore to be worshipped in the several Parts and Species of the Universe. Yet whilst they deified not only the *Nile*, but the vilest Creatures, and almost every part of the inferior World, they paid no [z] such Veneration to the Heavens. They * offered humane Sacrifices, and observed obscene Rites: But † *Amosis*, if we may credit *Manetho*, cited by *Porphyry*, abolished humane Sacrifice at *Heliopolis:* For what could be more unnatural, and against all common Reason, than to worship Beasts, and at the same time to sacrifice

y Jos. Acost. Hist. lib iv. c. 1.
z Phil. Jud. vit. Mos. l. iii.
* Athenæus, l. iv. c 21. Diod. Sic. l i. c 2. Dion. Cass. l. 42.
† Porph. de Abstin. l. ii. § 55.

Men? They had more sorts of Religion among them than other People, and [a] accused each other of Impiety, because in different Places they worshipped different Animals, which was the Occasion of frequent Wars. [b] *Plutarch* says, that the People of *Thebais* only, of all the *Ægyptians* worshipped but one God, whom they called *Kneph*. This is contrary to what [c] the more ancient Authors say of them, and might therefore probably be the effect of the Propagation of Christianity, which soon made a great Progress in *Egypt*; and many, who were not fully converted, were reduced from the gross Idolatries, which they before had practised. [d] Whoever killed any of the Beasts which by the *Ægyptians* were esteemed sacred, was punished with Death; and in a Famine they abstained from these, tho' they made no scruple to eat humane Flesh. In general, the *Ægyptian* Rites were so scandalous, that they were [e] forbidden at *Rome*. [f] Theft was allowed by them, under certain Restraints; and by a strange and unnatural Distinction, they taught [g] that Sons were not bound to provide for their Parents, unless they pleased; but Daughters were necessarily obliged to it.

But when the Excellency of the Christian Morals began to be so generally observed and taken notice of, the last Refuge of Philosophy was in the Moral Doctrines of the Stoicks. For almost all the latter Philosophers were of this Sect, which they refined and improved as well as they were able, that they might have something to oppose to the Morality taught (and practised too) by the Christians. But the [h] ancient Stoicks had been the Patrons and Advo-

[a] Diod Sic. ibid. c. 4. Dion. Cass. ib.
[b] De Isid. & Osir. [c] Strab. l. xvii. [d] Diod. Sic. ib.
[e] Dion. Cass. l. 54. [f] Diod. Sic. ib. c. 3.
[g] Herodian l. ii. c. 35.
[h] Theophil. ad Autolych. lib. iii.

cates

cates of the worst Vices, and had filled the Libraries with their obscene Books.

The Stoicks first sprang from the *Cynicks*, that impudent and beastly Sect of Philosophers; and they refined themselves but by degrees. *Zeno*, who had as great Honour done him by the *Athenians*, as ever any Philosopher had, under the Notion of his Virtue, taught, that Men ought to have their Wives in common; and would have been put to Death by the Laws of most Nations, for Sins against Nature. [i] *Chrysippus* taught the worst of Incest, as that of Fathers with their Daughters, and of Sons with their Mothers; and besides his Opinion for eating humane Flesh, and the like, both his Books, and those of *Zeno* were filled with such obscene Discourses, as no modest Man could read. [k] *Athenodorus* a Stoick, being Library-keeper at *Pergamus*, cut all such ill Passages out of the Books of the Stoicks; but he was discovered, and those Passages were inserted again. It is no advantage to *Cato*'s Character, that he should appear at the *Ludi Florales*, which he could not but know to be abominably Lascivious. * But when the People had such Reverence for his Person, that they were ashamed to require the *Mimæ* to be naked, as they were wont; he being acquainted with it, left the Theatre, that he might no longer by his Presence hinder an old Custom: For which he had the Thanks and Applause of the Rabble. Such was the Philosophy of *Cato* himself! He must have had a poor Opinion of Virtue, who would not use his great Authority with the People, to reclaim them from Vice, rather than to indulge them in it. But these Philosophers might do as they pleased; for they pretended to be exempted from Sin; and the Stoical Philoso-

[i] Diog. Laërt. in Zenon & Chrysipp. Plut. de Repugnantiis Stoic. Sext. Empiric. Pyr. Hypot. l. 3. c. 24, 25. adv. Matth. l. 10.

[k] Diog. Laërt. ib. * Valer. Max. lib. ii. c. 5.

phy, in the Original and Fundamental Doctrines of it, is nothing, as *Tully* observed, but a vain Pomp and Boast of Words, which at first raise Admiration, but when throughly considered are ridiculous; as, that Men must live without Love, or Hatred, or Anger, or any other Passion; that all Sins are equal; and that it is the same Crime whether a Man murther his Father, or kill a Cock, as [l] *Tully* says, if there be no Occasion for it. And it is no Wonder, that *Plutarch* and others wrote purposely to expose the Stoical Philosophy, upon its old and genuine Principles. The [m] Stoicks boasted, that *Chrysippus* had written with more Acuteness against the Truth of our Senses, than the Academicks themselves: But *Plutarch* observes, that when he would answer his own Arguments, he failed in the Attempt, which was [n] confess'd and complained of by the Stoicks themselves. The Truth is, a vain Subtilty seems to have been the Character of *Chrysippus*, as when [o] he would maintain, that Virtue and Vice, and Arts and Sciences, were corporeal and rational Animals; which not only *Plutarch* censures, but [p] *Seneca* exposes as ridiculous. The latter Stoicks being very sensible of the many defective and indefensible Parts of their Philosophy, endeavour'd to mollifie what seemed too harsh and absurd, that they might bring their own as near the Christian Doctrine as they could. *Quinctilian* will not allow that *Seneca* was any great Philosopher, but says, that his main Talent lay in declaiming against Vice. [q] *In philosophiâ parum diligens, egregius tamen vitiorum insectator fuit.* It was rather the Art and Design of *Seneca*, who knew wherein the Strength and Defect of his Philosophy lay, to endeavour to give it all the Advantage he could, and to recommend it to

[l] Tull. pro Muræna.
[m] Plut. de Repugnantiis Stoic.
[n] Cic. Acad. Qu. l. 2.
[o] Plut. adv. Stoic.
[p] Senec. Epist. 113.
[q] Quint. Inst. lib. 10. c. 18.

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the World by exposing the Follies and Vices of Men, rather than by instructing them in the Notions of his own Sect. But [r] this notwithstanding, was one of his Rules, *nonnunquam & usque ad ebrietatem veniendum*; and when he had exposed the Cruelties, the Filthiness, and the Absurdities of the Religions in use amongst the Heathen, in a Book written upon that Subject; yet, says he, [s] *quæ omnia sapiens servabit, tanquam Legibus jussa, non tanquam Diis grata.* And *Tully* likewise in divers places, when he has reason'd against the Absurdities of their Religion, resolves the Obligation to observe it into the Duty which Men are bound to pay to the Laws of the Government under which they live; their Philosophy, it seems, taught them, that we must obey Men rather than God. But they held no more than [t] *Socrates* had taught and practised before them. The [v] Stoicks taught, that there is nothing incorporeal, [w] and that God and Nature are the same thing. [x] *Plutarch* shews, that *Chrysippus* wrote irreverently of God and Providence, and he [y] charges both him and *Zeno* with Obsceneness. But [z] *Xylander* declares of one of *Plutarch*'s Tracts, that he could scarce endure to read it; and was so far from correcting the Faults of the MSS. that out of Modesty he purposely made some Passages obscure in his Translation; and in this Tract *Plutarch* cites *Solon*'s Verses, which make one of the worst parts of it: And in [a] another place would justifie that, by the Example of *Socrates*, which he there recommends from the Authority of *Solon*. *Epictetus* himself, who

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[r] Sen. de Tranqu. Animi. c. 15.

[s] Aug. Civ. Dei. l. vi. c. 10. [t] Xenophon, Memorab. lib. i.

[v] Tull. Acad. Qu. l. 1.

[w] *Quid enim aliud est Natura quàm Deus, & Divina Ratio toti Mundo & partibus ejus inserta?* Senec. de Benefic. l. 4. c. 7. Vid. c. 8. [x] De Repugnant. Stoic.

[y] Ib. & Sympos. l. 2. probl. 6.

[z] Xyland. Annot. in Amator. Plut. [a] De Fortun. Alex. l. i.

has

has set off the Heathen Morality to the best advantage, cannot be excused from great Errors and Defects. He teaches also, that Men should follow the Religion of their Country, whatever it be, *Enchirid.* cap. xxxviii. He allows too great Indulgence to Lust, cap. xlvii. And when he proposes Rules of Virtue, and cautions to arm Men against Vice and Temptation, how much short doth he fall of the Christian Doctrine? "If any Man, says he, tell you that "such a one has spoken ill of you; make no Apo- "logy for yourself, but answer, He did not know "my other Faults, or else he would not have charged "me with these only, cap. xlviii. This is a fine Saying, a pretty Turn of Thought; but what is there in it comparable to that awful and sacred Promise, *Blessed are ye, when Men shall revile you, and persecute you: ——— rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven*, Matt. v. 11, 12. Again, "When a "Man values himself, says *Epictetus*, for being able "to understand and explain the Books of *Chrysippus*; "say you to yourself, Unless *Chrysippus* had written "obscurely, this Man would have had nothing to "boast of. But what do I design? to study Nature, "and follow it? cap. lxxiii. This is no ill Satyr upon the Vanity of Men: But is there any thing in it like that Piety and Authority with which St. *Paul* reproves the same Vice? 1 *Cor.* viii. 1, 2, 3. So great were the Defects and Errors, not only of the *Learned Vulgar*, and the *Ignorant Vulgar*, (as [b] *Pliny* distinguishes) but of the Philosophers of highest Renown for Wisdom. The best thing that can be said of the Heathen Philosophers, is, that most of them frequently confess'd the great Imperfection of their Philosophy, and placed their greatest Wisdom in this, That they were more sensible than others of their Ig-

[b] *Sedere cœpit sententia hæc (de Astrologia) pariterque & eruditum vulgus & rude in eam cursu vadit.* Hist. lib. ii. c. 7.

norance;

norance: And *Socrates* profess'd that to be the reason, why the Oracle of *Apollo* declared him to be the wisest Man, because he knew how ignorant he was, better than other Men did.

As to the *Chinese* Philosophy, we know little of it, their [c] Books of Philosophy being all destroyed, at the Command of a Tyrant, who reigned about two hundred Years before Christ: From the Fragments which were afterwards gathered up, and yet remain among them, we can only perceive, that *Confucius*, and the rest of their best Philosophers, taught no more than what they had learnt by Tradition from their Ancestors; and when they forsook this Tradition, they fell into the grossest Errors, which are maintained by the learned Men amongst them at this Day.

II. Whatever there is of Excellency in the Philosophy of the Heathen, is owing to Revelation. It is generally supposed, that human Reason could have discovered the more common and obvious Precepts of Morality, contained in the Scriptures; but it is more probable, that it could not have discovered most of them, if we may judge by the gross Absurdities which we find, as to some Particulars, in the best Systems of Heathen Philosophy, and from the general Practice of offering up Men for Sacrifices to their Gods, and of casting away and exposing their Children, in the most civiliz'd Nations. The [d] Sayings of the *Wise Men*, that contain Rules, which to us seem very plain and obvious, were esteemed as Oracles, and in Golden Letters dedicated to *Apollo* in the Temple at *Delphi*. But it is evident, from what has been already proved at large, that the Heathen were not left destitute of many Helps and Advantages from the Scriptures, which divers of the Philosophers had read; and many things which seem now to be Deductions

[c] Confuc. lib. iii. par. 4. p. 36. & Philippi Couplet Procem Declar.
[d] Plin. Hist. lib. vii. c. 32. Pausan. Phocic.

from

from natural Reason, might have their Original from Revelation: for things once discovered, seem easie and obvious to Men, which they would never have been able to discover of themselves. We wonder now how Men should ever suppose there could be no Antipodes, and are apt to admire how *America* could lie so long conceal'd, rather than how it came at last to be discovered: The Case is the same in many other Discoveries, especially in moral Truths, which are so agreeable to Reason, that they may seem the natural Productions of it; though a contrary Custom and Inclination, and the Subtilty of Satan working upon our depraved Nature, might perhaps have made it very difficult, if not impossible, without a Revelation, to discern many Doctrines even of Morality, which now are most common and familiar to us. What Maxim is more agreeable, and therefore, as one would think, more obvious to human Reason, than that no Man should do to others, as he would not have them do to him? And yet *Spartianus* an Heathen Historian says, that *Alexander Severus* had this excellent Rule of Natural Justice and Equity, either from the Jews or Christians. There is no Book of Scripture which seems to contain plainer and more obvious things, than the *Proverbs of Solomon*; and yet an [e]Author of great Learning and Judgment has given an Essay, how a considerable Defect of Learning may be supplied out of this very Book, producing such Cautions, Instructions, and Axioms from thence, relating to the Business and Government of human Life, in all varieties of occasion, as are no where else to be met withal. No Man can tell, how far human Reason could have proceeded without Revelation; since it never was without it, but always argued from those Principles which were at first delivered by God

[e] *Ld.* Bacon's *Advancement of Learning*, p. viii. c. 2.

himself

himself to *Noah*, and were propagated amongst his Posterity throughout all Ages and Nations, though they were more corrupted and depraved in some Ages and Nations than in others.

[f] *Plato* derives the Original of all Laws from Revelation; and the Doctrines of Morality of the most ancient Philosophers were a kind of *Cabala*, consisting of general Maxims and Proverbs, without Argument or Deduction from Principles; as we see by the [g] *Apophthegms* of the *Seven Wise Men*, collected by *Demetrius Phalereus*. And it is the same thing at this day in those Countries where *Aristotle*'s Philosophy has not prevailed, who was one of the first that undertook to argue closely from Principles in Morality. But [h] *Aristotle* testified, that Proverbs were the Remains of the ancient Philosophical Precepts. And in other Parts of Philosophy, I shall prove, by some remarkable Instances, that human Reason failed them in the Explication of things which were generally received and acknowledged. The Existence of God is clearly and unanswerably demonstrated by [i] *Tully*, and the Unity of the Godhead is as plainly asserted by him. With what strength of Reason, with what plainness, with what assurance, doth [k] *Balbus* the Stoick speak concerning the Existence of the Deity? But when he would explain the Divine Nature, he describes a mere *Anima Mundi*, and exposes himself to the scorn and laughter of his Adversary; which shews, that human Reason could go no farther, than to discover the Existence of God, and that we can know little of his Nature but by Revelation; and that whatsoever true and just Notions the Heathen had of the Divine Nature, must be chiefly ascribed to that.

That the World was created, the Philosophers be-

[f] Plat. de Legib. dialog. 1. [g] Stobæus, serm iii.
[h] Synes. Calvit. Encom. sub fin. [i] Tull. de Legib. l. i.
[k] Tull. de Natur. Deor. lib ii.

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fore *Aristotle* generally asserted; and that Water was the first Matter out of which it was formed, is acknowledged by [l] *Aristotle*, to be esteemed the most ancient Opinion; but when he set himself to argue the point, he concluded the World to be eternal; which, according to modern Philosophy, is as absurd and impossible as any thing that can be imagined.

The Doctrine of the Immortality of the Soul, was delivered down from all Antiquity, as *Tully* assures us: but the Ancients gave no Reasons to prove it by; they only received it by Tradition. *Plato* was the first who attempted to prove it by Argument; for though *Pherecydes Syrus* and *Pythagoras* had asserted it, yet they acquiesced in Tradition, by which they had received it from the Eastern Nations; but [m] *Plato*, either learning the Doctrine of the Soul's Immortality in *Ægypt*, where it is generally supposed he conversed with the *Jews*, or being, at his coming into *Italy*, acquainted [n] with that, amongst other Notions of the *Pythagoræans*, began to argue upon it; but not being able to make it fully out, has only shewn how far Reason could proceed upon those Grounds, which were then known in the World from Revelation. [o] *Seneca*, though he sometimes asserts the Immortality of the Soul, yet at other times doubts of it, and even denies that the Soul has any Subsistence in a separate State. [p] *M. Antonius* speaks doubtfully of the Soul's Existence after Death. And yet this Doctrine of the Immortality of the Soul, which the greatest of the Heathen Philosophers could not certainly prove from Reason, was firmly believed even amongst [q] *Barbarians*.

Confucius,

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[l] Arist. de Cœlo, lib. i. c. 10. Metaphys. lib. i. c. 3.
[m] Pausan. Messen. [n] Tull. Tusc. Qu. lib. i.
[o] Epist. 54. 102. Consol. ad Marciam. c. 19.
[p] M. Antonin. lib. iv. § 21. lib. v. § 33. lib. vii. § 32. lib. xii. § 5. [q] Grot. de Verit. lib. i. Annot. Νομανιῶν ὁ σοφώτατος

Confucius, [r] the famous *Chinese* Philosopher, profess'd himself not the Author, but the Relater only of the Doctrine which he taught, as he had received it delivered down from all Antiquity; and [f] *Aristotle* has declared, that the Ancients left many Traditions, which their Posterity had corrupted; but from the remains of those Traditions, we know that they were originally derived from Revelation. *Pherecydes* was the first of the *Italick* Sect of Philosophers; and *Thales* was the Author of the *Ionick* Sect: from which Two Sects all the rest came, being only Divisions and Subdivisions from them. The first of the Philosophers that taught the Immortality of the Soul, was [t] *Pherecydes*; and he left his Writings to *Thales*, [u] who taught, that all things were produced by God out of Water. *Pythagoras* was a Scholar of *Pherecydes*; and *Pythagoras*, *Plato* and *Aristotle*, conversed with the Learned *Jews*. [x] *Socrates* disputed of a future State from Tradition, and [y] profess'd, that he always followed the Tradition which had descended from Antiquity, and that he was at a loss whenever that failed him. And this [z] Tradition could not have its Rise from the *Greeks*, who were confess'd to understand little or nothing of Antiquity. The * *Ægyptian* Priests affirmed, that they found it in their sacred Books, that *Orpheus*, *Musæus*, *Homer*, *Lycurgus*, *Solon*, *Pythagoras*, *Plato*, *Democritus*, and divers others of the wisest and most learned Men of *Greece* had travelled thither, and something they shewed as a Memorial of every one that had been among them; the Statues of

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θαυμασιος φιλοσοφος ἀνηκεν γεγονεν, τι γαρ ἐστι Πλατων ἡ Μωσης ἀττικιζων. Clem. Alex. Strom. 1. c. 23. fin. Quis Poetarum, quis Sophistarum, qui non omnino de Prophetarum fonte poturerint? Tert. Apol. cap. 47.

[r] Confuc. lib. iii. part 4. p. 36.

[f] Arist. Metaph. lib. xii. c. 8. [t] Tull. Tusc. Qu. lib. i.

[u] Tull. de Nat. Deor. l. i. [x] Plat. Phæd. [y] Plat. Phileb.

[z] Plat. Timæo. * Diod. Sic. i. l. c. 6.

some,

some and, certain Places denominated from others, or from the Studies which they followed were a token of it: [a] *Justin Martyr* says that they were there improved by the Books of *Moses*. All things fully proving, by *Diodorus Siculus*'s Account that they had learn'd in *Ægypt* whatever made them famous in *Greece*, as he shews not only of their Religion, but of their Laws and Philosophy. [b] *Plutarch* mentions, that *Solon*, *Thales*, *Plato*, *Eudoxus*, and (according to some) *Lycurgus* went into *Ægypt* to converse with the Priests there. It was [c] by some affirmed, that *Plato* and *Eudoxus* conversed with the Priests in *Ægypt* for thirteen Years. And [d] *Theodoret* acquaints us, that not only *Plutarch*, but *Porphyry*, and *Numenius* the *Pythagoræan* wrote, that *Pherecydes*, *Pythagoras*, *Thales*, *Solon* and *Plato*, were instructed in *Ægypt* by the *Hebrews* dwelling there, as well as by the *Ægyptians*. And the *Ægyptians* being in their Principles both of Divine Worship and Moral Duties so corrupted, as I have shewn, it is reasonable to conclude, with the Generality of learned Men whether ancient or modern, that whatever the Philosophers learnt in *Ægypt*, which recommends their Writings to us, must be from the *Jews*, and not from the *Ægyptians*. [e] *Pausanias* says, that the *Chaldæans* and the *Indian Magi* first taught the Immortality of the Soul, and that from them the *Greeks*, and particularly *Plato*, received it; and yet he informs us, that *Plato* learnt this Doctrine in *Ægypt*. He seems to have understood, that *Plato* was instructed in *Ægypt* by the *Hebrews*, (for by this Name [f] *Pausanias* always calls the *Jews*) and that the *Hebrews* came originally out of *Chaldæa*. Indeed *Abraham* was the first that was call'd a *Hebrew*, from his *passing over* the River *Euphrates*, when he left *Chal-*

[a] Cohort. ad Græc. [b] De Isid. & Osir. [c] Strabo. l. xvii.
[d] De Fide Serm. 1. Tom. 4. [e] Messen.
[f] Eliac. p. 151. 203. Arcad. p. 250

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dæa. This learned Author, from his great Search into Antiquities, must have had some particular Reason for calling the Jews *Hebrews*, and *Judæa the Land of the Hebrews*; such Expressions could not fall by chance from a *Greek* Antiquary, but must be design'd to denote their Original from *Abraham* the *Hebrew*, a *Chaldæan*; from whence it follows, that when he writes that *Plato* received this Doctrine from the *Chaldæans*, and yet that he learn'd it in *Ægypt*, he must mean, that he had it from the *Hebrews* dwelling there. *Clearchus*, one of *Aristotle*'s own Scholars, and a famous *Peripatetick* Philosopher, in a Book cited by *Josephus*, [g] introduced *Aristotle* saying, that the Jews were descended from the *Indian* Philosophers, and that as Philosophers were by the *Indians* call'd *Calani*, (deriv'd perhaps from *Chalane*, or *Calneh*, Gen. x. 10. a City of *Chaldæa*) so by the *Syrians* they were call'd *Jews* from *Judæa*, the Place of their Habitation. It is not mention'd, that this Information came from the learned Jew of *Cœlesyria*, with whom *Aristotle* there declares that he had convers'd; but he might probably have it from some in *Alexander's* Army, who might find divers of the Ten Tribes dispers'd as far as *India*, and whether they went under the Name of *Calani*, or the *Calani* came out of *Chaldæa*, the Jews and the *Calani* must have had the same Extraction. * The *Indian* Philosopher that conversed with *Alexander*, was called *Calanus*.

But a certain Critick has lately been pleased to remark, that the Old Testament contains nothing so clear, concerning another Life and a future Judgment, as is to be found in the *Greek* Authors; and he

[g] Contr. Ap. l. i. Eusebius *has the same Citation out of* Clearchus, *but omits that Clause, that Philosophers were called* Calani *by the* Indians. *and Jews by the* Syrians, Euseb. Præp. Evang. l. ix. c. 5. Καλανους Ἰνδους, ἀπ των Βραχμανων· ἀτω δε παντα σοφους οἱ Ἰνδοι προσαγορευουσιν. Suid. in Καλανος.

* Suid. ibid.

instances in *Homer* and *Hesiod*. How unjust this Reflexion is, I appeal to that Book of *Solomon*, from which the Enemies of Religion have thought, they could take most Advantage. *Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast, that goeth downward to the earth? Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy spirit chear thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thy heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into Judgment. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil*, Eccl. iii. 21. xi. 9. xii. 14. What can be more plain and express? The Notions in Philosophy * of the latter Heathens, were much improv'd by *Ammonius*, a Christian and a Teacher of Philosophy in highest Esteem at *Alexandria*; insomuch that those who succeeded him in his School, were said to be ἐξ ἱερᾶς γενεᾶς, of the Sacred Descent. And we find that upon the Propagation of the Gospel, Moral Philosophy in a few Years attained to greater Perfection, than ever it had done before, as we may see in the Works of *Seneca*, *Epictetus*, [h] *Plutarch*, *M. Antoninus*, *Maximus Tyrius*, and others.

We may therefore reasonably conclude, that the Precepts and Rules of Morality, which Philosophers all along taught, had their Original from Revelation, rather than from the Strength and Sagacity of their own Reason, because they err in things no less obvi-

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* *Vid.* Porphyr. apud Euseb. Hist. lib. vi. c. 19. & Hierocl. apud Phot. cod. 224, 251.

[h] Μετα γαρ δη την τε Σωτηρος ἡμων ἐπιφανειαν, ὅτοι (Plutarchus Numenius, & alii) ὀλιγοι της Χριστιανικης θεολογιας πολλα τοις οικειοις ἀνεμιξαν λογοις, Theodoret. Tom. 4. Serm. 2. de Principio. Και μην δη και των θειων Εὐαγγελιων ὁτε Πλωτινος και ὁ Πλωτινου ὑπηκουσατε. Δηλοι δε τουτο σαφως ὁ Ἀμελιος της Πορφυριε Πρωτους διαδεξαμενος, &c. ib. Ἀρκειτω τα παρα Ἀμμωνιε της δι' ἀκριβειας Πλωτινε, και Νουμηνιε τε Πυθαγορικε ἑρμηνεια, Nemes. de Nat. Hom. c. 2.

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ous to Natural Reason; and it appears that they had Opportunities of becoming acquainted with the Scriptures, and that they spared no pains either by reading or Conversation, in their own, or in foreign Countries, in their Search and Enquiries after Truth.

III. If the Heathen Philosophy had been as certain and excellent, as it can be pretended to be, yet there had been great need of a Divine Revelation. For,

1. The Rules of Philosophy lie scatter'd up and down in large and learned Works, mix'd with many wrong and absurd Notions, and therefore must be in great measure useless; how certain and excellent soever they may be in themselves, they can be no Rule of Life to us. No perfect Rule of Manners is to be found in any one Author; and if it were possible to compile such a Rule out of them all, yet what Man is able to collect them? [i] *Lactantius* is of opinion, that if all the Truths dispers'd up and down among the several Sects of Philosophers could be collected together into one System, they would make up a Body of Philosophy agreeable to the Christian Doctrine; but then he concludes it to be impossible for any Man to make such a Collection, without a supernatural Assistance. And if there were no other reason for it but this, it is no wonder that we find the [k] Twelve Tables preferred before all the Writings of the Philosophers. If there be nothing so absurd, as *Tully* says, but the Philosophers have taught it, then it is necessary that Men should not be left to the Uncertainties and Absurdities of Philosophy: for though some few of them might be free from such Extravagancies, yet their Notions were no Rule or Standard to the rest, and the best were not without many great Errors.

2. The Rules of Philosophy were no better than good Advice, and carried no Authority with them to oblige Men in Conscience; they had not the Force of

[i] Lactant. l vii. c. 7. [k] Tull. de Orac. lib. 1.

a Law, and failing in this necessary Point, whatever their intrinsick Worth had been, they never could have had that Effect upon the Lives of Men, which Reveal'd Religion has. Virtue was propounded by Philosophers rather as a Matter of Honour and Decency, than of strict Duty; those were esteemed and admired indeed that observed it, but such as did not, only wanted that Commendation. Some Philosophers spoke great and excellent things, but they past rather for wise Sayings, than for Laws of Nature: Their own Reputation, which was greater or less with different sorts of Men, was the only Authority they had: it might be prudence to do as they taught, but there appear'd no absolute necessity for it. They commonly represented Virtue as very lovely, with many very great and powerful Charms; and all that were of another mind, did not know a true Beauty, and that was an intolerable Disgrace: the Sanction of Rewards and Punishments in the next Life was little insisted upon by them. They recommended Virtue for its own sake, not as it is enjoin'd by God, and will be rewarded by him, and the contrary punish'd; and those, who could not soar to their Heights, were rather the worse than the better for such Doctrines, which they look'd upon as the impracticable Speculations of some, who had a mind to speak great things. And they often spoke the Truth indeed, which they had from Tradition, or from the Excellency of their own Wit and Genius, but they were not able to make it out by any such Principles, as are wont to influence and govern humane Actions. Accordingly we find, that as the several Sects of Philosophy suited to the Tempers and Humours of particular Men, so far they prevail'd, and no farther. The curious and inquisitive betook themselves to the Academicks, the soft and effeminate to the Epicureans, and the morose to the Stoicks; Men apply'd themselves to whatever Opinion they liked best, and found most agreeable to their Nature

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and Disposition. Thus a severe and haughty Gravity made up the Composition of *Cato*; it had been hard for him to avoid being a Stoick, and he might probably have founded that Sect, if it had not been known in the World before. The Philosophers had no Authority to promise Rewards, or to threaten Punishments upon the Observation or Neglect of their Precepts, and therefore every Man was at his Liberty to choose or to reject what they taught; and divers of them were sensible of this unavoidable defect in all humane Doctrines, and therefore pretended to Revelation.

There is no Inconvenience therefore in supposing, that many of the Precepts contained in the *Proverbs*, and other Books of Scripture, might be known without a Revelation: for there is notwithstanding very good Reason, why they should be inserted into the Scripture: Because the Scriptures have the Authority of a Divine Law, and are to be look'd upon, not as a System of Ethicks, or a Collection of Moral Precepts, but as a Body of Laws given out upon divers Occasions, and as Rules of Instruction, which at the same time both shew us our Duty and command our Obedience. It is not expected, that Kings in their Laws should argue more profoundly than other Men do, but they should command more effectually than others can teach; they do not dispute, but pronounce and dictate, what their Subjects must take notice of at their peril. It is no Diminution to a Prince's Authority to command the most known and obvious things, though it may be a Fault in the Subject to need such Commands. And God in his Word did not design to furnish us with a Treatise of Philosophy. to gratify our Curiosity with strange and new Notions, and make us profound Scholars; but to speak to the Necessities of Men, and put them in mind of known Duties, to appeal to their own Consciences, and to enforce those Notions of Good and Evil, which

natural Reason perhaps might suggest to them, by the Authority of a Reveal'd Religion, and a Divine Law, established upon Rewards and Punishments.

3. Though the Philosophers were able to discern something more than other Men, yet they durst not openly declare what they knew, but were over-born with the Errors and Vices of the Times and Countries in which they liv'd, even to the Commission of Idolatry, and the worst of Vices; and therefore their Doctrines, whatever they were, could do but little Good towards the Reformation of the World. I shall not enquire into the Reports concerning *Socrates* and *Plato*, *Seneca* and *Cato* himself, but only observe, that *Socrates*, who was the only Martyr among the Philosophers for the *Truth*, yet when he comes to die, speaks with no Assurance of a future State, and order'd a Cock to be sacrific'd to *Æsculapius*, which can hardly be reconciled to that Doctrine, for which he is supposed to die. And after his Death, how did his Friends and Disciples behave themselves? Did they openly and couragiously vindicate his Innocence, and teach the Doctrine for which he suffered? Did they not use all means to conceal and dissemble it? Did not [l] *Xenophon* dedicate a Temple to *Diana Ephesia?* Did not [m] he and *Plato* envy and oppose each other? But Mankind stood in need of a perfect Example of Virtue, and of such Instructors, as should both teach and practice the Doctrines of it at their utmost peril, and of a Succession of such Men, as should bear Testimony to their Doctrine, both by the Miracles wrought during their Lives, and by the Constancy of their Deaths.

4. As the Heathen Philosophy wanted the Authority of a Law, and the Example of those who taught it; so it wanted the principal Motives to recommend the Practice of it to the Lives of Men. The Philo-

[l] Pausan. Eliac. 1. [m] Athenæus, Deipn. l. xx. c. 15.

sophers

sophers teach nothing of the exceeding Love of God towards us; of his Desire of our Happiness, and his Readiness to assist and Conduct us in the ways of Virtue. They own'd no such thing as Divine Grace and Assistance towards the Attainment of Virtue, and the Perseverance in it. —— [n] *Virtutem autem nemo unquam acceptam Deo retulit, nimirum rectè: propter virtutem enim jure laudamur, & in virtute rectè gloriamur, quod non contingeret, si id donum à Deo, non a nobis haberemus —— nam quis, quod bonus vir esset, gratias Diis egit unquam —— Jovemque optimum maximum ob eas res appellant, non quod nos justos, temperatos, sapientes efficiat, sed quod salvos, incolumes, opulentos, copiosos.* This occasion'd those [o] insolent Boasts of the Stoicks, equalling themselves to the Gods, and sometimes even preferring themselves before them, because they had Difficulties to encounter, which made their Conquests of Vice, and their Improvements in Virtue, more glorious than they supposed the like Excellencies to be in their Gods, who were good by the Necessity of their own Nature. Yet these [p] very Stoicks could at other times borrow from the Scriptures, this Doctrine of Divine Grace and Assistance, as well as other Doctrines, the better to recommend their Philosophy, after the Propagation of the Gospel, tho' [q] in plain Contradiction to themselves.

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[n] Tull. de Nat. Deor. l. 3.

[o] Plut. adv. Stoicos. Chrysipp. apud Plut. de Stoic. Repug.

[p] *Bonus vir sine Deo nemo est. An potest aliquis supra fortunam nisi ab illo adjutus exurgere; ille dat consilia magnifica & erecta,* Sen. Epist. 41.

[q] *Est aliquid quo sapiens antecedat Deum: ille Naturæ beneficio, non suo sapiens est,* Id. Epist. 31. 53. *Quid votis opus est? fac te ipse felicem,* Epist. 31. *par Deo surges,* in. *Deus non vincit sapientem felicitate, etiamsi vincit ætate,* Epist 73. *Sed si cui virtas animusque in corpore præsens, hic Deos æquat* Epist. 92.

Wherefore, tho' the Rules of Philosophy had been never so perfect, yet they must needs be ineffectual, being so difficult to find out, and so unactive and dead, when they were discover'd, without that Authority, and Life, and Energy, that may be had from Divine Revelation, for which there was a Necessity, not only to supply the Imperfections, and correct the Errors of Philosophy, but to enforce the Doctrines of it, tho' they had been never so true and perfect.

CHAP. VI.

The Novelty and Defect in the Promulgation of the Mahometan Religion.

THE Novelty of the Mahometan Religion, in respect both of the Old and New Testament, is past all Dispute. And this Religion, notwithstanding all its sensual Allurement, owes its Propagation solely to the Power of the Sword. For though the Alcoran has been translated into most of the Languages in use amongst Christians, yet it has never been known to make any Proselytes, but by force of Arms, and the Success of those Victories, which have tempted profligate and desperate Men to seek for Shelter under them. At first, this Religion had many Circumstances for its Advantage, which might, in humane probability, gain it Success in the World. It was begun in Rebellion, and in a final Revolt from the Emperor *Heraclius*; and besides this popular and seducing Temptation of Licence and Violence, *Mahomet* added the Enticements of Lust and Sensuality. He forbad Men indeed some things, but such as he could easily see they would part with in those Climates for the free and unbounded Enjoyment of others: he pretended likewise to found his Doctrine on the Autho-

rity

rity of *Moſes* and of Chriſt, ſaying, that Chriſt had promiſed to ſend him; all which, made his Religion find the more eaſy Entertainment amongſt both Jews and Chriſtians. The corrupt Lives, and the many Schiſms and Hereſies of the Chriſtians of that Age, in thoſe Parts of the World, gave great Opportunity to the Riſe and Progreſs of it. 'Twas but like the Hereſy of the *Gnoſticks* at the firſt, and not altogether ſo groſs; and this muſt needs encline all of ſeditious and lewd Principles to come in to him, being glad of ſuch a colour for their Wickedneſs; and it had the advantage of Power and Force to make it more laſting than other ſuch Blaſphemies have been.

Chriſt, on the contrary, forbad Reſiſtance of the ſupreme Power, upon any terms whatſoever; he aſſerted the Authority of *Moſes*, but ſo, as to aboliſh the ceremonial Part of the Law, which was what the Jews were moſt fond of: ſo that this very thing made the Jews the moſt implacable Enemies of Chriſtianity, and brought Chriſtians into contempt among the Heathen; for nothing could make the Goſpel of leſs Account in their Eſteem, than to deduce its Authority from the Books of the Jews, who, ſoon after the Crucifixion of Chriſt, became vile and contemptible in the Eyes of all the World. It can be no great Wonder, to ſee Men drawn into thoſe Vices, under the pretence of Religion, from which no Laws nor Puniſhments can reſtrain them; but for Religion that forbids all Vice, under the ſevereſt Penalties, to prevail in a vicious World, is truly miraculous. Beſides, it is Death, by the Law of *Mahomet*, to contradict the Alcoran; Men are forbid all Diſputation and Diſcourſe about Religion, they are charged to believe none but *Mahometans*, and to look upon all others as unworthy of all manner of Converſation. So that the Sword in the hands of furious and ignorant Zealots, is the only way by which that Religion was deſigned to be propagated.

But

But notwithstanding all these Compliances with the Lusts and Passions of Men, if we take in all Ages since the Incarnation of Christ, the Christian Religion (not to mention the Jewish) has had a much larger propagation than ever Mahometanism has had; and has at all times been taught in more Parts of the World, and even amongst Mahometans themselves. And the Alcoran it self asserting the Divine Authority and Mission both of *Moses* and *Christ*, serves in some measure to propagate the Faith of the Old and New Testament; so far, I mean, as to give an Advantage and Opportunity for Men to make enquiry into them, and become acquainted with them. Divers Books of Scripture are received by Mahometans, the [r] reading whereof has been the means of bringing over many Persons of great Note to the Christian Faith, especially among the *Persians*, where Disputes in Matters of Religion are permitted; and [s] it has not been without the like effect in *Turkey*, where such Disputes are forbidden, on Pain of Death.

CHAP. VII.

The want both of Prophecies and Miracles in the Mahometan Religion.

MAhometanism is grounded neither upon Prophecies nor Miracles. *Mahomet* indeed calls himself Prophet very solemnly, but we have but this one Instance of his Prophetick Spirit: [t] *When the Prophet went to visit one of his Wives, God revealed*

[r] Sanson. état du Royaume de Perse, p. 237.
[s] Ricaut's *Hist. of the* Ottom. *Emp.* lib. ii. c. 11, 12.
[t] Alcoran, c. 66.

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to him, what she desired to say to him; he approved one part, and rejected the other: When he told his Wife what was in her will to speak to him, she demanded of him, who had revealed it to him? He that knoweth all things hath revealed to me, that he may be converted: your hearts are inclined to do what is forbidden; if ye act any thing against the Prophet, know that God is his Protector. Here is not one Circumstance to make the Story credible.

Mahomet pretended to no Miracles: But when he has raised that Objection, (as he often doth) That the World would not believe in him, unless they saw some Miracle; he answers, [b] *I am not sent but to preach the Word of God.* Tho' afterwards he mentions that ridiculous Story of the Moon's being divided, in these Words; [c] *The Day of Judgment approacheth, the Moon was divided into two parts; nevertheless, Infidels believe not Miracles when they see them; they say that this is Magick; they lye, and follow but their Passion, but all is written.* Here is no proof, nor any pretence to it, but only a confident Assertion of a thing ridiculous. And yet unless we will believe this Prophecy, and this Miracle, there is nothing in the whole Alcoran, either of Miracle or Prophecy, to give it any Authority, except that must be accounted one, which he so often boasts of, *viz.* its wonderful Doctrine and Eloquence; for [d] he challenges all the World to produce any thing like it, protesting [e] that he could neither write nor read, and therefore must needs have it by Revelation. He [f] tells a fabulous, monstrous Story, of a Journey which he took one Night into Heaven; and he introduces God, swearing to the Truth of the Alcoran, almost in every Chapter: And this is all he offers, in answer to the Suspicions which he so

[b] Alcor. c. 13. [c] Ibid. c. 54. [d] Ib. c. 10, 11, 16.
[e] Ib. c. 7. [f] Ib. c. 17.

frequently

frequently suggests Men then had of his being an Impostor.

CHAP. VIII.

The Alcoran is false, absurd, and immoral.

I. THE Alcoran is false; as when it makes [a] the Virgin *Mary* Sister to *Aaron*; when it asserts, that [b] Christ was not crucified, but one like him, in contradiction to the Testimony of the Jews, Christians, and Heathens; and that Christ [c] propheſied of *Mahomet* by name, without the least proof or ground for it, but against all the Evidence that can be to the contrary.

II. The Alcoran contains things absurd and ridiculous; as in that Story of the Sleepers, [d] *The Infidels say they were five, and that their Dog was the sixth, they speak by opinion; but the true Believers affirm them to be seven, and their Dog to be the eighth.* And [e] in the Story of *Solomon*'s Army, composed of Men, Devils and Birds; of the Queen of the Pismires; and *Solomon*'s Discourse with the Bird call'd the Whoop, who brought him Tidings of the Queen of *Sheba*.

III. The Doctrines of the Alcoran are impious and immoral. *Mahomet* makes all the Angels worship *Adam*, in several parts of his Alcoran; and his sensual Paradise is well known, and his Allowance of many Wives; but perhaps his Injustice is not so generally taken notice of, [f] in permitting the Professors of his Religion to take away their Slaves Wives from them.

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[a] Alcor. c. 19. [b] Ib. c. 4. [c] Ib. c. 61.
[d] Ib. c. 18. [e] Ib. c 27. [f] Ib. c. 4. & 23.

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The Law of *Mahomet* proceeds from a savage and cruel Spirit, obliging those that embrace it, to destroy all that are not of it; however, the *Mahometans* have not always acted according to the cruelty of their Religion, human Nature not being always able to act so much contrary to itself. But this is *Mahomet*'s Doctrine, [g] *God loveth not the unjust*, he *forgiveth sins* to *those that believe and extirpate Infidels.* [h] *If they forsake it*, (the Law of God, pretended to be set down in the Alcoran) *kill them where you find them. Be not negligent to pursue the Infidels.* Of this the [i] *Faquirs*, at their return from *Mecca*, are very mindful, with a furious zeal killing all they can that they meet, who are not *Mahometans*, 'till they are kill'd themselves, and then they are reputed Saints, and Prayers are made at their Graves.

Such is the Alcoran as we now have it, and yet it is not now as it was at first written by *Mahomet*, [k] many Alterations have been made in it, by inserting some things, and striking out others, and taking some of the Absurdities away: *Mahomet*, the Second particularly, is said to have made great Alterations and Additions. [l] But the *Persians*, the Followers of *Hali*, charge *Abu-Beker*, *Omar*, and *Ozman*, whom the *Turks* follow, with falsifying the Alcoran.

All Religions are tolerated in the *Turkish* Empire but the *Persian*, which is absolutely forbid, as a Corruption of *Mahometism*. I could never yet see, says the learned Dr. *Smith**, any *Turkish* Translation of the Alcoran, *Perfick* Translations are frequent, not being prohibited. I cannot but here observe, that some learned Men have of late suspected, that the Christians of former Ages have misrepresented the Maho-

[g] Alcor. c. 3. [h] Ib. c. 4.
[i] Tavern. Voyage d' Ind. lib. 3. c. 24.
[k] Sandys's *Travels*, lib. 1. p. 54.
[l] Ricaut's *Hist. of the* Ottom. *Emp.* lib. 2. c 10.
* *Dr.* Smith of C. P. *Miscell. Curios.* p. 35, 53.

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metans, with whom they liv'd, and against whom they wrote, and have charged them with Errors which they never maintained. But I refer it to the Consideration of any impartial and judicious Man; whether it be not more probable that some Sect of Mahometans did maintain the Tenets alledg'd against them, tho' they may now have long been laid aside and forgotten, than that Christians have objected imaginary and feigned Absurdities, when there are visibly so many real ones, even in the Alcoran it self. Christians applied themselves to the Confutation and Conviction of those with whom they conversed, or against whom they disputed; and they might sometimes perhaps mistake that for a received and common Tenet, which was peculiar to some one Sect or Party.

And thus the Gospel of *Hieronymus Xaverius* might probably pass, among Mahometans, for the Gospel fess'd by all Christians, and they might reply to it under that Notion. *Xaverius* indeed wrote and publish'd it, at the Command of an Emperor of *Persia:* But if his Book had been privately dispersed, whoever had gone to confute it as the Gospel of Christ, would have been thought very ignorant, or very malicious. Tho' now, whatever Mahometan has alledged the Gospel of *Xaverius* as containing the Doctrines of the Christian Religion; should not be thought to deal insincerely; but by mistake to apply that to Christians in general, which concerned only an erroneous and very corrupt part of them.

The learned Writer of the *Life of Mahomet* informs us, that [m] *Al Gazali*, a famous Philosopher of "*Tusa* in *Persia*, wrote many Books in defence of "the Mahometan Religion; and one of more espe- "cial Note, intituled, *The Destruction of Philosophers*, "against *Alfarabius* and *Avicenna*, and some others "of the *Arab Philosophers*; who, to solve the mon-

[m] *Dr.* Prideaux's *Life of* Mahomet, *p.* 170.

"strous

" strous Absurdities of the Mahometan Religion, " were for turning many things into Figure and Al- " legory, which were commonly understood in the " literal Sense." And he before observes, that[n] "As " the Interest and Designs of the *Impostor* varied, so " was he forced to make his pretended Revelations " to vary also. Which is a thing (says he) so well " known to those of his Sect, that they acknowledge " it; and therefore, where the Contradictions are " such, as they cannot solve them, there they will " have one of the contradicting places to be revoked. " And they reckon in the whole Alcoran above an " hundred and fifty Verses which are thus revoked, " which is the best shift they can make to solve the " Contradictions and Inconsistencies of it."

Now it may well be imagined, that when Figures and Allegories were introduced to serve a desperate Cause, many Zealots, rather than give up so much of the Revelations of their pretended Prophet, would strain their Inventions to find out Glosses however absurd, which were afterwards dropt, and are found mentioned only by Christians, who wrote in confutation of them.

The Contradictions commonly observ'd in the Accounts of Travellers, are principally to be ascribed to this; That they who travel into the same Countries, converse with Men of different Customs and Places of Habitation; and that which seems a Contradiction is very well consistent with Truth; but the mistake of each Relator in delivering that for general, through the whole Country, which is peculiar to one or some few Districts, is that which makes them contradict each other. And it is the same thing as to the History of Doctrines and Opinions: Tenets less known or observable might fall under the Censure and Confutation of particular Men, and may remain to Posterity in their Writings, tho' not yet discovered in

[n] *Dr.* Prideaux ib. p. 155.

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any Remains of Mahometan Authors. But it is probable, that great Discoveries may in time be made by Men learned in the *Arabick* Tongue, which may free the *Greek* Writers from the Imputation of Ignorance or Insincerity. It must be confess'd, that no Controversy in any kind of long continuance, has been always managed with a like Accuracy; but weak Arguments and false Allegations, may, through Ignorance or Inadvertency, sometimes have been used. Notwithstanding, what has generally been insisted upon by many Authors of Reputation, probably must have some Foundation of Truth. And it is much more credible, that barbarous Nations should forego Opinions, which they were not able to maintain, than that they should be charged with what none of them ever held, when the Tenets, which their Religion certainly advanced, afforded as great advantage to their Adversaries.

CHAP. IX.

Of Mahomet.

After this Account of *Mahomet*'s Alcoran, there will be no need to say much of his Person. The general Doctrines of the Alcoran shew him to have been lustful, proud, fierce and cruel; but as if that were not enough, he has taken care to insert such Particulars concerning himself, as to suffer no Man to be ignorant of the Spirit and Temper, by which he was guided in penning it. He blasphemously introduces God thus speaking to him, [a] *O Prophet, we permit thee to know the Women, to whom thou hast given Dowry, the Women-Slaves, which God hath given thee, the Daughters of thine Uncles, and of thine*

[e] Alcor. c. 33.

Aunts,

Aunts, that have abandoned with thee the company of the wicked, and the true believing Wife, that shall be given thee, if thou wilt marry her, and that she be not the Wife of a true Believer. It seems he gave himself the Liberty to take away the Wives of any that were not of his Religion. *Thou shalt retain whom of thy Wives thou shalt desire to retain, and shalt repudiate such as thou shalt desire to repudiate, and shalt lie with them that shall please thee.* By this means his Family of Wives became pretty numerous; some say they were fifteen, others say one and twenty, beside Concubines; and therefore it was fit he should take some care to keep them true to him, and so he bespeaks them after this manner: [b] *Oh! ye Wives of the Prophet! such of you as shall be unchaste, shall be punished doubly more than other Women; this is a thing easy to God: such among you as shall obey God and his Prophet, and shall do good Works, shall be rewarded more than other Women, an exceeding great Reward is prepared for you. Oh, ye Wives of the Prophet! ye are not like other Women of the World; fear God, and believe not in the discourse of such as have a Design to seduce you; speak with Civility, abide in your Houses, go not forth to make your Beauty appear, and to make a Shew, as did the ignorant of old.* This explains what was mention'd before of a Revelation *Mahomet* pretended to have concerning something that one of his Wives was to say to him; he had a mind to make them believe that he knew whatever they did or said, that so he might keep them in awe, that they might not dare to prove false to him.

His Pride is evident in this which follows, [c] *Ye that believe, enter not into the Houses of the Prophet without permission, except at the Hour of Repast, and that by chance, and without design; if ye are invited, enter with freedom, when ye shall have taken your Re-*

[b] Alcor. c. 33. [c] Ibid.

past, depart out of the House, and tarry not to discourse one with another, this molesteth the Prophet, he is ashamed to tell you the Truth. But this is not all, his Number of Wives made him incurably jealous, and therefore he adds, *you ought not to importune the Prophet of God, neither to know his Wives, this would be a most enormous Sin.*

The Fierceness of *Mahomet*'s Spirit may be seen by this one Saying, [d]*He that is angry that God giveth Succour and Protection to* Mahomet *in this World, let him tie a cord to the Beam of his House, and hang himself, he shall see if his Choler will be allay'd.* It is notorious, that he set up his New Doctrine first in oppressing his own Country-men, who would not submit to his Imposture, and afterwards in Rebellion against the Emperor *Heraclius*, then at War with the *Persians*; and his Alcoran is fit only for a *Saracen* Camp, preaching Lust to his Followers, but Blood and Destruction towards all others.

This may satisfy any Man, that there is nothing in the Author of the Mahometan Religion, nor in the Religion it self, which may incline him to believe it to be of Divine Revelation. But whoever would know more of this vile *Imposture*, may see it *fully display'd in the Life of Mahomet*, lately publish'd by the Learned Dr. *Prideaux*.

[d] Alcor. c. 22.

THE

THE REASONABLENESS and CERTAINTY OF THE Christian Religion.

PART IV.

CHAP. I.

That there is as great Certainty of the Truth of the Christian Religion, as there is of the Being of God.

FROM what has been discours'd, the Truth of the Christian Religion is evident, by all the Arguments, by which any Religion can possibly be proved to be Divine; and if there be any such thing as true Religion, the Christian Religion must be it: And if this be made appear, it is all that need be said in defence of the Christian Religion, to any one but an Atheist.

The Scriptures are defective in nothing that is requisite in a Divine Revelation, but have all that can be required in the highest degree. To instance here only in Miracles, and in those only of our Saviour and his Apostles: Our Saviour wrought his Miracles

in the midst of his Enemies, and extorted a Confession from the Devils themselves, of his Divine Power. And if the Apostles had not been well assured, and absolutely certain of his Resurrection, they would never have had the Confidence, and the Folly (for it could have been no less) to maintain so soon after his Death in *Jerusalem*, the City where he was crucify'd that he was risen from the Dead; they would never have chosen that, above all places, to preach this Doctrine, and work their Miracles in, if they had not been true: at least, they would never have done it, at the great and solemn Feast of Pentecost, to provoke the *Jews* to expose them to all the World for Impostors; no they would have taken time to have laid their Design with some better Appearance and Contrivance: to be sure, they would have avoided *Jerusalem* as much as they could, and above all times, at so solemn a Festival as that of Pentecost; they would have gone rather to the remotest Corners of the Earth to have told their Story, than have run the Hazard of such a Discovery. But when they stood the test of all that the *Jews* could say or do to them, when in that very City, where he had been so lately crucify'd, they told the *Jews* to their Face, and before that numerous Concourse of People, which was then met together at *Jerusalem*, that they were Murtherers; that they murthered their *Messias*, but that he was risen from the Dead, and that by virtue of his Resurrection they spoke those Languages, and did those Works, which they then saw and heard: This was plain and open Dealing, and there could be no Deceit in it. If any thing of this could have been disproved, they had been for ever silenced: but their worst Enemies were so far from being able to disprove what they said, that about three thousand Converts were made on the Day of Pentecost.

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The innocent and divine Life of our Saviour, the Holiness and Excellency of his Doctrine, the Simplicity and Meekness, and Constancy of his Disciples, the Continuance of Miracles for several Ages in the Church, the wonderful Propagation of the Gospel by a few poor, ignorant, despised, and persecuted Men, every Passage, every Circumstance, in the whole Dispensation of the Gospel, is full of Evidence in proof of it. But thus much in this place shall suffice, all Particulars having been largely insisted upon in their proper places.

That no manner of Confirmation might be wanting to our Religion, Apostates themselves have given to all the Arguments above-mention'd, an additional, accidental Strength and Force, which they so little need. *Judas* had been the Disciple and constant Attendant of Christ, and knew all that an Accuser would desire to know of one, whom he had betray'd. But what could he lay to his Master's Charge? Could he discover, or durst he invent, any thing against him? Did he not die in the Confession of Christ's Innocence, and of his own Guilt in betraying him? *Porphyry* had taken great pains in studying all the Sects of Philosophy, and in examining all Religions; but he became such an Enthusiast, that no Philosophy, no Religion, could please him: He represented [a] *Socrates* under a very ill Character, but gave this Testimony of *Christ*, after he had renounced the Christian Religion; that [b] he was a most pious Person, and is gone to Heaven, and ought not to be reviled. The Emperor *Julian* had been a *Reader* in the Church, and had exact Knowledge of the manner of Life and Discipline and Doctrine among Christians; he had all the Opportunities of acquainting himself with whatever the Jews or Heathens, for-

[a] Porphyr. apud. Cyrill. contr. Jul. l. vi. p. 185, 186. Ed. Lipsi. Socrat. Hist. l. 3. c. 23.

[b] Apud Euseb. Demonstr. l. 3 c. 6.

merly or in his own time, had suggested, and knew how to make the most Advantage of any thing, that fell under his own Observation, or which he had learnt by the Information of others, against a Religion, which all his Power, and Learning, and Subtilty, were employ'd to destroy. Yet this Apostate Emperor, [c] recommended the Charity, Piety, and good Conversation of the Christian Bishops to the Imitation of his own Priests: He could not [d] deny the Miracles of *Moses* and *Elias*, and of [e] *Christ* himself. For what reason, but because he found it impossible to disprove them? He had the *Roman* Archives in his possession; Why did he not confute what *Justin Martyr* and *Tertullian* had publish'd from them, concerning the Birth of Christ, and the Acts of *Pilate* relating to his Miracles and Resurrection? Would he have had Recourse to remote Arguments, and tedious Reasonings, if the Jews, whom he so highly favour'd in Opposition to the Gospel, or any other Enemies of Christianity, could have furnish'd him with Evidence against the Matters of Fact, upon which our Religion entirely depends?

And since, as sure as there is a God, there must be a Reveal'd Religion; if any Man will dispute the Truth of the Christian Religion, let him instance in any other Religion that can make a better Plea, and has more Certainty that it came from God; let him produce any other Religion that has more visible Characters of Divinity in it, and we will not scruple to be of it. But if it be impossible for him to shew any such (as has been proved) then he ought to be of this, since there must be some Reveal'd Religion; and if this Religion, which has more Evidence for it, than any other Religion can be pretended to have, and all that it could be requisite for it to have, suppo-

[c] Epist. 49. Fragment. Epist. p. 305. [d] Apud Cyrill. l. x. p. 343.
[e] Ib. l. vi. p. 191, 213.

sing

sing it true, and which it is therefore impossible to discover to be false, if it were so; if this Religion be not true, God must be wanting to Mankind, in what concerns their eternal Interest and Happiness; he must be wanting to himself, and to his own Attributes of Goodness, Justice and Truth. And therefore he, that upon a due Examination of all the Reasons and Motives to it, will not be a Christian, can be no better than an Atheist, if he discern the Consequence of things, and will hold to his own Principles; for there can be no Medium, if we rightly consider the Nature of God, and of the Christian Religion; but as sure as there is a God, (and nothing can be more certain) the Gospel was reveal'd by him.

CHAP. II.

The Resolution of Faith.

HAving proved the Truth and Certainty of our Religion, I shall in the last place, upon these Principles, give a Resolution of our Faith, which is a Subject that has caused such unnecessary and unhappy Disputes amongst Christians in these latter Ages; for in the Primitive Times, this was no matter of Controversy, as indeed it could not then, and ought not now to be.

I. Considering the Scriptures only as an History, containing the Actions and Doctrines of *Moses* and the Prophets, and of our Saviour and his Apostles, we have the greatest humane Testimony, that can be, of Men, who had all the Opportunities of knowing the Truth of those Miracles, *&c.* which gave Evidence and Authority to the Doctrines, as Reveal'd from God, and who could have no Interest to deceive

others, but exposed themselves to all manner of Dangers, and Infamy, and Torments, by bearing Testimony to the Truth of what is contain'd in the Scriptures; whereas Impostures are wont to be invented, not to incur such Sufferings, but to avoid them, or to obtain the Advantages and Pleasures of this World. This Testimony amounts to a moral Certainty, or as it is properly enough called by some, to a moral Infallibility, because it implies a moral Impossibility of our being deceived by it: such a Certainty it is, as that nothing with any reason can be objected against it. We can have as little reason to doubt, that Christ and his Apostles did, and suffered, and taught, what the Scriptures relate of them, in *Jerusalem*, *Antioch*, &c. as that there ever were such Places in the World; nay, we have that much better attested than this, for many Men have died in Testimony of the Truth of it.

II. This Testimony being considered with respect to the Nature of the thing testified, as it concerns eternal Salvation, which is of the Greatest Concernment to all Mankind, it appears that God's Veracity and Goodness are engaged, that we should not be deceived inevitably in a Matter of this Consequence: So that this moral Infallibility becomes hereby absolute Infallibility: and that which was before but Humane Faith, becomes Divine, being grounded not upon Humane Testimony, but upon the Divine Attributes, which do attest and confirm that Humane Testimony; and so Divine Testimony is the ultimate Ground, why I believe the Will of God to be delivered in the Scriptures; it is no particular Revealed Testimony indeed, but that which is equivalent to it, *viz.* the constant Attestation of God by his Providence. For it is repugnant to the very notion of a God, to let Men be deceived, without any possible help or remedy, in a matter of such importance. And thus we have the ground of our Faith absolutely infal-

infallible, because it is evident from the Divine Attributes, that God doth confirm this Humane Testimony by his own.

III. The Argument then proceeds thus: If the Scriptures were false, it would be impossible to discover them to be so; and it is inconsistent with the Truth and Goodness of Almighty God, to suffer a Deceit of this nature to pass upon Mankind, without any possibility of a Discovery; therefore it follows, that they are not false. Here is, 1. The Object, or Thing to be believed, *viz.* that the Revelation delivered to us in the Scriptures, is from God. 2. The Motive or Evidence to induce our Belief, *viz.* Humane Testimony. 3. A Confirmation of that Testimony, or the Formal Principle and Reason of our Belief, *viz.* The Divine Goodness and Truth. The Object therefore, or Thing believed, is the same to us that it was to those who saw the Miracles by which the Scriptures stand confirmed, *viz.* the revealed Will of God: and the Ground or Foundation of our Belief, is the same that theirs was, *viz.* the Divine Goodness and Truth, whereby we are assured, that God would not suffer Miracles to be wrought in his own Name, according to Prophecies formerly delivered, and withall other Circumstances of credibility, only to confirm a Lie. The only difference then between the resolution of Faith in us, and in the Christians who were converted by the Apostles themselves, is this, that tho' we believe the same things, and upon the same grounds and reasons with them, yet we have not the same immediate Motives or Evidence to induce our Belief; or to satisfie us in these Reasons, and convince us, that the Revealed Will of God, contained in the Scriptures, is to be believed upon these grounds; that is, to satisfie and convince us, that the Belief of the Scriptures being the Word of God, is finally resolved into the Authority of God himself; and is as well certified to us,

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as his Divine Attributes can render it. For they were assured of this from what their own Senses perceived; but we have our Assurance of it from the Testimony of others.

The Question therefore will be, whether the Motives and Arguments for this Belief in us, or the means whereby we become assured, that the Revealed Will of God is contained in the Scriptures, be not as sufficient to produce a Divine Faith in us, and to establish our Faith upon the Divine Authority, as the Motives and Arguments which those had, who lived with the Apostles, and saw their Miracles, could be to produce that Faith in them, which resolved it self into the Divine Authority. And this Enquiry will depend upon these two Things: 1. Whether we may not be assured of some things as certainly from the Testimony of others, as from our own Senses. 2. Whether this be not the present Case, relating to the Resolution of Faith. I shall therefore consider in the first place, the Certainty which we have for the Matters of Fact, by which the Authority of the Scriptures is proved and confirmed to us, compared with the Evidence of Sense, and will then apply it to the Resolution of Faith.

I. In many cases Men seem generally agreed, that there is as much cause to believe what they know from others, as what they see and experience themselves: For there may be such Circumstances of Credibility, as equal the Evidence even of Sense it self. No Evidence can satisfy Sense so much indeed, nor perhaps so much affect the Passions, as that of Sense; but there may may be other Evidence, which may give as clear Conviction, and altogether as good Satisfaction to our Reason, as that which is immediately deriv'd from our Senses, concerning the Being of Objects, or the Truth of Matters of Fact. Thus those who never travelled to the *Indies*, do as little doubt that there is such a Place, as those who have been never so often

ten there; and all Men believe, there was such a Man as *Julius Cæsar*, with as little scruple as if they had lived in his time, and had seen and spoke with him. I suppose no Man in his Wits makes any more doubt, but there are such Places as *Judæa* and *Jerusalem*, from the constant Report of Historians and Travellers, than if he had been in those Places himself, and had lived the greatest part of his Life there: and the greatest Infidel that I know of, never pretended yet to disbelieve, that there was such a Person as our Saviour Christ. But all Men think themselves as well assured of things of this nature upon the Credit of others, as if they had seen them themselves. For how doubtful and intricate soever some things may be, for want of Knowledge or Credit in the Relaters, yet there are other things delivered with that Agreement and Certainty on all hands, that to doubt of them would be as unreasonable, as to doubt of what we our selves see and hear.

And if our Saviour's Resurrection, for instance, be of this nature, we can with as little reason doubt of it, as if we had lived at that time, and had conversed with him after his Resurrection from the Dead. But we have as great Assurance that he was alive again after his Crucifixion, as that he ever lived at all; and we have at least all the Assurance that there was such a Person as Christ, that we can have, that there once lived any other Man at that distance of time from us. We can no more doubt, that our Saviour was born in the Reign of *Augustus Cæsar*, and was crucified under *Tiberius*, than that there were once such Emperors in the World; nay, we have it much better attested, that Christ was born, and was crucified, and rose again, than that there ever were such Princes as these two Emperors: for no Man ever made it his Business to go about the World to certifie this, and to testifie the Truth of it at his Death. But the Apostles themselves, and their Disciples

ciples and Converts, and innumerable others ever since, from the beginning of Christianity, have asserted the Particulars of the Life, and Death, and Resurrection of our Saviour, under all Dangers, and Torments, and Deaths; and have made it their great aim and design, both living and dying, to bear Testimony to the Truth of the Gospel. So that a Man may as well doubt of any Matter of Fact that ever was done before his own time, or at a great distance from him, as doubt of these Fundamentals of the Christian Religion; and yet there is no Man, but thinks himself as certain of some things at least, which were done a long time ago, or a great way off, as if he had been at the doing of them himself.

Indeed, in some respects we seem to have more evidence than those could have that lived in the beginning of Christianity; for they could see but some Miracles, we have the benefit of all; they relied upon their own Senses, and upon the Senses of such as they knew and conversed with; we upon the Senses of innumerable People, who successively beheld them for the space of divers hundred Years together: So that whoever will not believe the Scriptures, *neither would he believe, though one rose from the Dead*; that is, though the greatest Miracle were wrought for his Conviction. This was said of the Old Testament, and therefore may with greater reason be said of That and the New both.

And we have besides, one sort of Evidence, which those that lived at the first planting of Christianity, could not have; for we see many of those Prophecies fulfilled, which our Saviour foretold concerning his Church; we know how it sprung up and flourished, and from what small and unlikely Beginnings it has spread it self into all Corners of the Earth, and continues to this day, notwithstanding all the malice of Men and Devils to root it out, and destroy it. The Continuance and Success of the Gospel under so impro-

improbable Circumstances, was matter of Faith chiefly to the first Christians, but to us is matter of Fact, and the Object of Sense: they saw the Work indeed prosper in their hands; but their Faith only could tell them that it should flourish for so many Ages, as we know it has already done: This is a standing and invincible Proof to us, at this distance of time, and has the force of a two-fold Argument, the one of a Power of Miracles, the other of Prophecies: we know that a miraculous Power has been manifested in conquering all Opposition, and in a wonderful manner bringing those things to pass, which to human Wisdom and Power are altogether impossible. And the fulfilling hereby of Prophecies, is a visible Confirmation to us of the Truth of those Miracles, which, by the Testimony of others, we believe to have been done by the Prophets, whose Prophecies we see fulfilled. And since it must be acknowledged that things may be so well attested, that we may with as much reason doubt of the Truth of our own Senses, as of the Authority, by which we are assured of the Truth of them, and must turn Scepticks, or worse, if we will not believe them; we may conclude, as well upon the account of these Prophecies, which we our selves see fulfilled, as upon all other accounts, that the Historical Evidence in proof of the Christian Religion, amounts to all the Certainty that a Matter of Fact is capable of, not excepting even that of Sense it self.

II. Let us now apply all this to the Resolution of Faith, and give an Account how a divine and infallible Faith may be produced in us. Human Testimony is the Motive by which we believe the Scriptures to contain God's Reveal'd Will: This certifies us, that such Miracles were wrought, and such Prophecies delivered, as give to the Scriptures the full Evidence and Authority of a Divine Revelation. If therefore it be enquired, why we believe the Scriptures to be

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the Word of God? The Answer is, upon the account of the Miracles and Prophecies, which concurring with all other requisite Circumstances in a Revelation, confirm the Truth of them. If it be ask'd, how we know that these Prophecies and Miracles are true and effectual, and not feigned or insufficient? I answer, because we have them so related and attested, that considered barely as Matter of Fact, they have all the Credibility that any Matter of Fact is capable of, and therefore may as safely be relied upon, as any thing which we do ourselves see or hear. If it be farther urged, that for all this I may be deceived, since all Men are fallible, and no Man is infallibly assured that there is such a Place as *Rome* who never saw it; tho' no Man neither can any more doubt of it, than he can doubt whether there be any such Place as *London*, who lives in it. I acknowledge, that there is a bare Possibility of being deceived in all human Evidence; but yet I deny that we can possibly be deceived in this case, because, though the Evidence it self be human, yet the things which it concerns are of that nature, that God would never suffer the World to be thus long imposed upon in them, without all possibility of finding out the Truth. So that here we resolve our Faith into the Divine Authority, by reason of the same Miracles, by reason whereof the Eye-witnesses of them did resolve theirs into it; but they believed these Miracles as seen by themselves, and we believe them as seen and witnessed by others; but both they and we believe them as the Works of God himself.

It might have been alledg'd, if we had seen those Miracles, that we might possibly be deceived; and so indeed we might, if we could not have securely relied upon God's Truth and Goodness, that they were designed by him to confirm the Doctrine, for the sake of which they were wrought: And we may with equal Security rely upon the same Truth and Goodness

Goodness for the Certainty of the History of them, as we could have done for the Sufficiency of them to the purpose for which they were wrought, though they had been performed in our Sight; since it is as impossible to find out any Deceit in the Account given of them, as it would have been for us to find any in the Miracles themselves at the time of their performance.

Human Testimony is the Conveyance and the Means of delivering the Truth contained in the Holy Scriptures down to us; and we, who could neither see the Miracles nor hear the Doctrines at the first hand, have at this distance of time the Truth of them ascertained by a continued successive Testimony, 'till we arrive at such as were immediate Witnesses of them. Now, those that saw and heard all things which are delivered to us in the Scriptures, could not esteem their Senses infallible; but they, notwithstanding, believed our Saviour and his Disciples to be so, of whom yet their Senses only could give them means of assurance, that they were infallible. They knew their Senses might deceive them, (or that they might be mistaken concerning the Objects of Sense) but nevertheless, they believed that our Saviour and the Apostles could not deceive them, upon this only ground, that their Senses or their Reason, by Deduction from Sense, told them so. There was not one Man of them, perhaps, but had often observed his Senses misrepresent Objects to him; and yet, in this case, upon the sole Testimony of their Senses, they grounded an infallible Faith: Because, though their Senses had misrepresented Objects, yet it was in a wrong *medium*, at an undue distance, or by reason of some Indisposition of the Sense itself; and still their Senses, or rather their Reason by the help of their Senses, discovered that their Senses had led them into Mistakes. But in the present Case, when the Object was placed in open and frequent

frequent view, to the greatest advantage, when it was publick and exposed to Multitudes, when all agreed in the same Opinion concerning it, and when the Matter was of infinite Importance; here they had reason to conclude, that the God who framed their Senses, would not suffer them to be so hurtful to them, as they must needs have been, if they had been deceived by them. In like manner, in the Testimony, which descends to us from former Ages, we see with other Mens Eyes, and hear with other Mens Ears; and though the Testimony of others may often fail us, and is subject to a double Inconveniency through the Incapacity and Unfaithfulness of Witnesses; yet, as in the former case, so here, when all Circumstances are weighed and considered, and, after the utmost Trial, no Reason can be found to with-hold our Assent, but all things stand undisprov'd, and no just Scruple appears, but only a bare possibility of being deceived; and this arising, not from any defect, but that of human Nature it self, here God's Goodness and his Truth must needs interpose, to take away that only Impediment, which otherwise must unavoidably hinder any thing from ever being known to be infallible.

The only Certainty which we can have, that our Senses are true, is this, That God will not suffer them to be deceived, where the Disposition of the *Medium* and Distance of the Object, and all other Circumstances, are rightly qualified: because that would be inconsistent with his Attributes of Justice, Goodness and Truth. But it would be inconsistent with these Attributes, not upon the Account of our Bodies; for they would be provided for as well, though our Senses were deluded; we should see, and hear, and taste, just as we do now, though we were never so much deceived in these Sensations: therefore the Truth, and Goodness, and Justice of God, are engaged not to suffer us to be deceiv'd, in respect to

to our Souls, not in regard to our Bodies; and if we have no Certainty that our Senſes do not deceive us, but becauſe God would not ſuffer ſuch a Cheat to be put upon us, as we are intelligent and rational Beings; we have the ſame and much greater Reaſon to conclude, that he would not ſuffer us to lie under ſuch a Deluſion, in reference to our eternal Intereſt. If God would not ſuffer our Minds unavoidably to lie under a temporal Deluſion of no great conſequence; have we not much more Reaſon to conclude, that he would not ſuffer us unavoidably to be deceived by any means whatſoever, in reference to our eternal Intereſt? For in this caſe, to be deceived is to be deſtroyed; and to ſuffer it, is a thouſand times worſe, than if he ſhould ſuffer all Mankind at once, not only to be deceived by their Senſes, but to be poiſoned by that Deceit: And therefore the ſpecial Providence and particular Care of God, muſt be concerned to prevent it. If we have nothing to object but the Imperfection of humane Nature, we may rely upon God, that this ſhall never miſlead us, in a matter of ſuch conſequence, whether the Imperfection be in our Senſes, or in the Teſtimony of others. In ſhort, the Miracles related in the Scriptures will as effectually prove a Divine Revelation to us, as they could to thoſe that ſaw them; but the difference is, that they believed their Senſes, and we believe them; and all things conſidered, we have as much reaſon to believe upon their Evidence, as they could have to believe upon the Evidence of their Senſes.

Let us conſider Hiſtory as a *Medium*, by which theſe Miracles become known to us, and compare this *Medium* with that of Sight. If a Man would be ſceptical, he might doubt whether any *Medium* of Sight be ſo fitly diſpoſed, as to repreſent Objects in their due Proportion, and proper Shape: he might ſuſpect that any Miracles which he could ſee, were falſe, or wrought only to amuſe and deceive him, and

there would be no way to satisfie such a one, but by telling him, that this is inconsistent with the Truth and Goodness of God. So in this other *Medium* of History, which to us supplies the want of that of Sight, a Man may doubt of any Matter of Fact, if he pleases, notwithstanding the most credible Evidence; but in a Matter of this Nature, where our eternal Salvation is concern'd, we may be sure, God will not suffer Mankind to be deceived, without all possibility of discovering the Deceit. The Circumstances have all the Marks of Credibility in them; and therefore, if they be duly attended to, cannot but be believed; and the Doctrine of which they are brought in Evidence, being propounded to be believed, under pain of Damnation, requires that they shall be attended to, and consider'd: and that, which is in its Circumstances most credible, and in its Matter is supposed necessary to Salvation, must be certainly true, unless God could oblige us to believe a Lye. For not to believe things credible, when attended to and known to be such, is to human Nature impossible; and not to attend to things proposed, as from God, of Necessity to Salvation, is a very heinous Crime against God, and to think that God will suffer me to be deceived in what I am oblig'd, in Honour and Obedience to him, to believe upon his Authority, is to think he can oblige me to believe a Lye.

But it may be objected; If this be so, how comes it to pass, that they are pronounced *blessed, who have not seen, and yet have believed*, John xx. 29. which seems to denote, that a peculiar Blessing belongs to them, because they believe upon less Evidence. I answer, that they are there pronounced Blessed, who had so well considered the Nature and Circumstances of things, the Prophecies concerning the Messias, and what our Saviour had delivered of himself, as to believe his Resurrection upon the Report of others

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not because others might not have as sufficient grounds for their Belief, as those who saw him after his Resurrection, but the Evidence of Sense is more plain and convincing to the generality of Men, tho' Reason proceeds at least upon as sure and as undeniable Principles. A Demonstration, when it is rightly perform'd, is as certain, as the self-evident Principles upon which it proceeds, though it be so far removed from them, that every one cannot discern the Connexion. Demonstrations may be far from being easy and obvious, but are oftentimes, we know, very difficult and intricate, which yet, when they are once made out, are as certain as Sense it self. The Blessing is pronounced to him, who believes not upon less Evidence, but upon that which at first seems to be less, which is less observable, and less obvious to our Consideration, but not less certain, when it is duly consider'd. For which Reason our Saviour, after he had wrought many Miracles, that were effectually attested by sufficient Witnesses, required Faith in those who came to be healed of him, because the Testimony of others was the means, which in Ages to come, was to be the Motive of Faith in Christians, and he thereby signified to us, that there may be as good Grounds for Faith upon the Report of others, as we could have from our own Senses, and generally those who came in Unbelief, went away no better satisfied. Wherefore it is said, that in his own Country, because of their Unbelief, *he could do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them*, Mark vi. 5. The same Evangelist acquaints us that our Saviour said, that the Children of the Bride-Chamber *could not fast* as long as the Bridegroom was with them, Chap. ii. 19. Not for want of Power certainly, but because it was not fit and proper for them. And he could not do his mighty Works, because they would be ineffectual, and would be lost upon them, he could do nothing insignificant

or in vain: If they would reject what had been so fully witnessed to them, they would not believe, whatever Miracles they should see him do. *Luke* x. 23. the Disciples are pronounced *blessed*, because they had seen the Miracles of our Saviour, and heard his Doctrine. Which is very well consistent with the Blessedness here ascribed to those, who had believed what they had never seen. The Disciples were blessed, in those Means and Opportunities granted them, beyond what others enjoyed: Those, who had not the same Evidence, were blessed, in that they, by the Grace of God, overcame those Difficulties which stood in the way; and had the same Faith with them, who had not the same Temptations to Incredulity. For he is said to be a happy Man, who obtains his End without Difficulties to encounter, before he can arrive at it; and he likewise is accounted remarkably happy, who overcomes all Opposition to gain his End. And those in the middle State, who find some Difficulties, but not so much considerable, are such, as in respect of both the other, are esteemed less happy in the manner and means of obtaining it, tho' the Event be the same, and they attain the Enjoyment of the same End.

Our Saviour cannot be supposed in either of these places to speak of the final State of Blessedness in Heaven, and to determine at one time that they shall there enjoy more Happiness, who *have seen*, and to declare at another, that they shall be more happy, who *have not seen*. For how can it be consistent, that Men should be peculiarly entitled to the Blessedness of Heaven upon so opposite Terms, some for having seen, and others for not having seen? But our Lord speaks of the Blessedness of the means of Salvation, with respect to the greater or less Difficulty which accompanies them. The Words are spoken of the time present: *Blessed are the Eyes, that see the things which ye see*; and *Blessed are they, that have not seen*,

seen, and yet have believed. And no Man can conceive, that all, who had believed upon the Report of others, should upon this account and consideration be advanced to greater Degrees of Blessedness in Heaven, than St. *Thomas*, and the rest of the Apostles. But our Saviour gives St. *Thomas* a gentle Reproof for his Incredulity, by telling him, that since he did not believe, till he had been compelled to it by the utmost Conviction, that any Man can receive from his own Senses in any case; It was a very happy and blessed thing for the generality of Christians, that they were not so difficult and slow of Belief, but could believe without the same Means which had been afforded him, but was not vouchsafed to them. If all Men were as diffident as he had been, how few would be saved? But it was happy for other Christians, that in this they were not like him.

It is very remarkable, that amidst all his Miracles, our Saviour directs his Followers to *Moses* and the Prophets, and appeals to the Scriptures for the Authority of his very Miracles, and that even after his Resurrection, he instructs his Disciples, who saw and discours'd with him out of the Scriptures, to confirm them in the Truth of it, *Luke* xxiv. 26, 27. He requires the Jews to give no greater Credit to his own Miracles, than that which he implies, they already gave to the Writings of *Moses*, so as firmly and stedfastly to believe that he came from God. And we having all the Helps and Advantages which the Jews had to create in them a Belief of the Scriptures of the Old Testament, and many more and greater Motives (if it be possible) to believe those of the New, must therefore have sufficient means to excite in us that Faith which our Saviour required of those who saw his Works, and heard his Doctrine; which certainly was a Divine Faith, and all the Faith, which if it be accompanied with sincere and impartial Obedience, is required in order to Salvation.

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Upon the whole Matter, I conclude, that the Truth of the Christian Religion is evident even to a Demonstration: for it is as demonstrable that there is a God, as it is that I my self am, or that there is any thing else in the World; because nothing could be made without a Maker, or created without a Creator; and it is as demonstrable, that this God being the Author of all the Perfections in Men, must himself be infinitely perfect; that he is infinitely Wise, and Just, and Holy, and Good; and that according to these Attributes he could not suffer a false Religion to be imposed upon the World in his own Name, with such manifest Tokens of Credibility, that no Man can possibly disprove it, but every one is obliged to believe it.

FINIS.